

The Neighborhood of Saturdays

**Memories of a Multi-Ethnic Community
on Indianapolis' Southside**

**Susan B. Hyatt, with Benjamin J. Linder,
Margaret Baurley and Others**

Cover photo of Russell Kohlman and Normajo Moore, 1940s. Courtesy of Normajo Moore.

Back photos courtesy of Angela Herrmann. Top photo, left to right: Becky Profeta, Henry Dabney, William Levu, Arthur Dabney, Jr., Gladys Cohen Nisenbaum, Henrietta Schwartz Mervis.

Next photo: Terry Hazen Ward and Letha Johnson Beverly.

Next photo: Garry Mervis, Henrietta Schwartz Mervis, William Craig, Beatrice "Pete" Miller, Letha Johnson Beverly, Beverle Miller Kane.

Next photo: (left to right): Scott Nahmias, Arthur Dabney, Jr., John Mance "Mancy" Calloway.

© 2012 Susan Hyatt
All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written permission of the author.

First published by Dog Ear Publishing
4010 W. 86th Street, Ste H
Indianapolis, IN 46268
www.dogearpublishing.net



ISBN: 978-1-4575-1491-3

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Printed in the United States of America

The Neighborhood of Saturdays



This map shows the complex network of small streets and alleys that were home to the modest houses and rich variety of small shops and businesses that once thrived on the near Southside.

Map of the near Southside, pre-1-70

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Map of the near Southside, pre-I-70	
Map of the near Southside post-I-70	
“Lest We Forget”: Preface from the Sephardic Community by William Levy	ix
“Rejuvenation”: Preface from the African American Community by William Craig	xiii
Introduction: “Southside of Heaven,” by Susan Brin Hyatt	1
Chapter 1: “Little by Little We Came”: Immigration, Migration and the Making of a Multi-ethnic Southside by Mercedes Cannon, Jessica Forthoffer and Kenji Townsend	27
Chapter 2: “Their Saturdays Were Our Sundays”: Religious Institutions and Observances by Heidi Sebastian and Adam Vogel	47
Chapter 3: “They Really Prepared the Kids to Go Out in the World”: Neighborhood Schools by Margaret Baurley, with research contributed by Erin Busk and Drew Alvin Smith	64
Chapter 4: “They Certainly Took Care of Us”: Community Centers and Recreation by Margaret Baurley with research contributed by Cynthia Forrester and Christina Riley	80

Chapter 5: “When the Grocer Looks Out for You”: The Southside Business Community by Benjamin J. Linder and Kirsten Lewis with research contributed by Evan Danner, Govind Dhaske, Patricia Jordan, Dustin Klingler and Lindsay Schaiper	95
Chapter 6: “That Was My Job Then”: Employment and Labor by Benjamin J.Linder with research contributed by Ryan Logan and Marcela Castro Madriaga.....	123
Chapter 7: “We Loved to Play the Jukebox”: Musical Traditions by David Plasterer and Anne Waxingmoon.....	146
Chapter 8: “We Have a Special Feeling for the Dead”: Death and Mourning by Anne Waxingmoon	157
Chapter 9: “Why Did They Choose My Community?” The Construction of I-70 and the Breakup of the Old Neighborhood by Lindsay Schaiper.....	165
Afterword: The View from the Indiana Historical Society by John Herbst, President and CEO, Indiana Historical Society.....	177
In Memoriam.....	179
Epilogue.....	180
Appendix A: Growing Up Sephardic, by Gladys Cohen Nisenbaum	184
Appendix B: Southside Nicknames	189
Appendix C: A Changing Neighborhood: The “Biography” of the 1100 Block of South Capitol	194
References Consulted.....	204
Donors and Contributors.....	209

“Lest We Forget”

Preface from the Sephardic Community

By William Levy



Old friends William Levy and Henry Dabney reunite at an event at Etz Chaim.

How many opportunities in a person's lifetime do you get to memorialize your reminiscences? This is a practice typically reserved for literary "old-folks." Yet, the more "mature" I get, the more I find myself talking about the "good ole days" down on the Southside. I never dreamed that someday, it would all culminate with a group of eager young IUPUI Anthropology students and their mentor/professor, hosting a meeting at Etz Chaim synagogue in 2010, to talk about a possible class project on the history of the old Southside. I never

imagined that soon after that, they would be calling to schedule an interview, or to scan some old photos, or to just "pick your brain" about "what it was like." They said it was something to do with developing the story and ultimately putting it into some kind of book form.

When I learned about the project, I was very excited and eager to participate, to be involved, just like most of the Sephardic community members



William Levy speaking at a service at South Calvary Missionary Baptist Church

were. I immediately lamented the fact that so many of our community “historians” had already passed away. They had so much to tell. Fortunately we still had a core of “old-timers” who could help put this thing together. More importantly it was a chance to reunite with old friends from the once very diverse Southside, whom we had lost track of or had not seen in many years. Another IUPUI anthropology class before this group had done essentially the same thing for an eastside neighborhood, with some success. How this particular class project all came together is the amazing part of this whole project. I will defer to Professor Susan Hyatt to share those details.

The basic beauty of this documentary/story lies in the way that two totally diverse communities co-existed throughout the early 1900s up until the early 1950’s in a single neighborhood made up of modest homes and proud people, in what seemed to be effortless harmony. Sephardic Jews (along with other Jews from different backgrounds) and African Americans. It doesn’t get more different than that. Two totally different peoples, different colors, different backgrounds, different language, coexisting beautifully. What I saw was acceptance of all of those differences, coupled with friendship. A perfect match. Like most immigrant communities, the Sephardic Jews were most comfortable with each other but interacting with our Black neighbors also

came easily to us. To this day, I often hear people comment, when they come into our synagogue, that the people are so warm and friendly and welcoming to everyone. That probably explains why getting along with all of our neighbors, whatever race and religion they were, was never an issue. Neighbors, friends, interacting with one another? No problem.

At the time of this writing, I have no idea what this “end product” will be, will look like, or how it will be received, but I know that the effort has been “all out.” I suspect this book will probably not earn an honorable mention in the monthly listing of non-fiction bestsellers, but it should prove to be historically interesting and readable. It will include a lot of “feel good” moments. I know I speak for all of the participants from the Sephardic community in acknowledging and applauding the effort of the students and their “boss,” Sue Hyatt. We are flattered to have been asked and grateful for the opportunity to share our individual and collective stories. Finally and most importantly, let the message of this book be: if this entire world could live in the same spirit of understanding and tolerance that this old Southside neighborhood enjoyed for all of those years, what a wonderful place it would be, could be, and should be. It is doable and takes some effort, but it is always worth a try. It is never too late. Thank you southside neighbors for all the lessons learned.

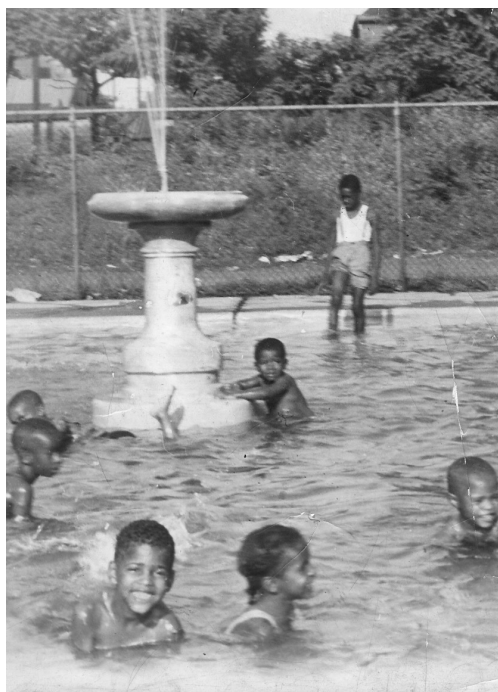


A group celebrates at the Sephardic 4th of July picnic in the 1950s. William Levy's father, Isaac, appears in the center, wearing a Turkish fez.

“Rejuvenation”

Preface from the African-American Community

By William Craig



Children play in the wading pool at Mielke St. Park, later renamed Babe Denny Park. A young William Craig crouches beside the fountain.

Thinking about this project, the first word that comes to mind for me is “rejuvenation.” This project has really been an exercise in rejuvenation. Whenever we have a meeting about the project, afterward, “Pete” (Beatrice Miller) and I will get together and talk. It’s made us remember so many people and places we thought we’d long forgotten. I am really glad we are preserving this history for our children and our grandchildren and even for people who moved into the Southside more recently and don’t really know what it used to be like.

My parents moved to Indy from Connersville, and they had the experience of going to mixed schools, so we really never knew anything different. The first time I really became aware of prejudice was when I went to take a test for a job. A white friend went with me and when it was over, they told us that he had passed the exam but I hadn’t. I thought that was very unlikely.

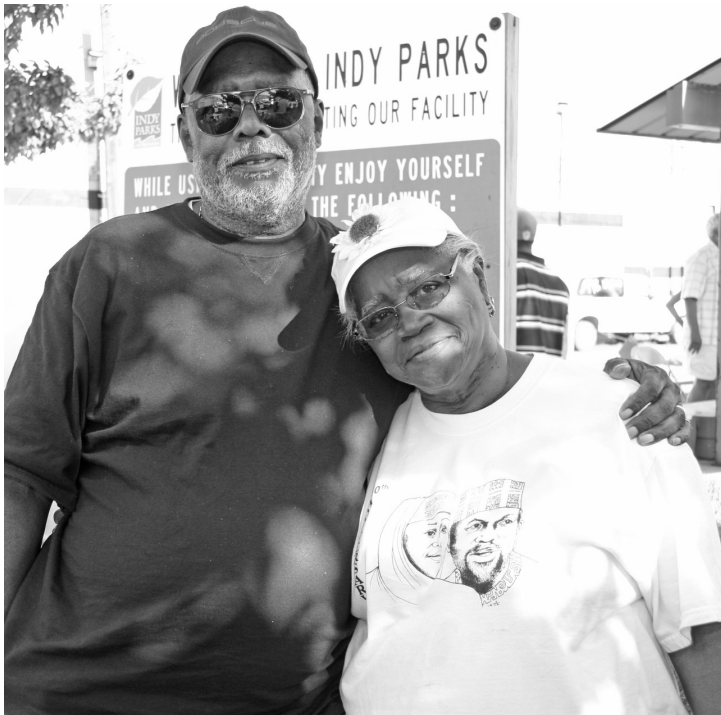
When we started to get together to plan this project a few years ago, I was delighted to see old friends from School #12 and Manual High School whom I hadn't seen in years. I remembered Lee Cohen (now Lee Mallah) and many others—just to see Normajo (Moore), Letha Johnson (Beverly), and Terry (Hazen) Ward back together again—boy! I remember them as little girls hanging around together in the 1000 block of South Capitol! It's been a wonderful time of reunions for many of us. It was amazing when we found out that Becky Profeta and Cleo Moore had lived at the same address. Since we've come back together, there have been lots of connections that we have rediscovered among us.

I always knew the neighborhood really well because I sold newspapers every Sunday, before church, on the corner where Passo's Drugstore used to be—so I'd see everyone go by. I was raised at South Calvary Baptist Church, and my family has deep roots on the Southside. Our first Craig Brothers Funeral Home was located at 1002 South Senate, and it opened in 1936. When that property was taken by eminent domain for the construction of I-70 in the '60s, I did research on the city plans. Because I didn't see any mention of South Capitol in those plans, we then bought the Schwartz grocery store at 826 South Capitol to use for relocating our funeral home. After that property was taken as well, we moved the funeral home north, though the family still owns property on the Southside.

Talking with the students has brought back all kinds of memories—the students have been great about trying to find out as much as they can about “the old days.” I think one of the highlights of our experiences together was the weekend when the New York Times reporter was here, and the Jewish folks came down to South Calvary, and we went up to the Synagogue to worship together. Although we'd gone to school together and played together on the streets and sometimes went to one another's houses, I don't think we'd ever gone to each other's houses of worship, and I found that to be quite enlightening.

I feel lucky to have grown up the way I did, and I am glad that this book will tell that story. In this part of town, nobody caused any trouble—we just got along with one another. Where we all really came together, in addition to school, was at the Communal Building and at Mayer Chapel—those were always integrated spaces. That was our common ground. As “Pete” always says, “We didn't grow up in a Black neighborhood or a white neighborhood—we grew up in a mixed neighborhood.” We just took it for granted.

Thank you to IUPUI, to the Concord Center, to the students, and to everyone who has helped us with this project. I hope that others who read it will understand why it's been so important to us to share these memories. We are so grateful to have been reunited with our Jewish neighbors and with other old friends and to tell this story together. It's kept us young and on our feet, and we hope everyone will learn from us how special an experience it was to grow up in "The Neighborhood of Saturdays."



Miz Pete (Beatrice Miller) and William Craig enjoy the annual Babe Denny Picnic, which occurs every year on the first Saturday in August.

INTRODUCTION

"Southside of Heaven"

The Story of a Community Project
By Susan B. Hyatt

SOUTHSIDE OF HEAVEN

There's a part of this fair city
That means so much to me
Where I've resided since a child
And raised my family.
It makes me proud when I am asked,
"Which part of town you from?"
"The best part," I then answer,
"South of Washington."
"What's so special?" they then ask
I'm wound up like a clock
About the folks who live here
On each and every block.
They're down to earth good people
Who'll lend a helping hand
To friend or foe if needed
You'll find they're really grand.
When I depart from this old world
And I may have a choice
If Heaven's got a Southside
My selection I will voice.

By: Mrs. Gilbert (Lois) Grubbs
2304 Randall Street

Our Own Little Piece of Heaven

This poem was given to a student in my class by one of the Southsiders, Betty Taylor, whom we interviewed for this project. And though it might appear to be a bit overly sentimental to outsiders, this little poem is emblematic of how people from the Near Southside feel about their community.

This book is about a part of Indianapolis we are calling “the Southside.” Though the term “Southside” can refer to a much larger area than the blocks we studied, “our” Southside is from South Street to Morris Street, West Street to Madison Street. Our timeframe focuses on life in this neighborhood from the 1920s up to the construction of I-70 in the early 1970s.



Leon Mordoh and Pauline Finkton pay tribute to the spirit of the old Southside at a meeting of the Concord Business Association.

This is the story of a neighborhood that, in terms of race relations, was way ahead of the curve. Beginning in the early part of the 20th century, when this story begins, the residents of this neighborhood were already living out many of the ideals that we now talk about as “multi-culturalism” or “diversity.” Within these once densely populated blocks, a number of racial, religious and ethnic groups lived side-by-side. But, these households didn’t just co-exist in proximity

to one another— they shared deep bonds of friendship and fellowship. One of our key interviewees and project participants, Beatrice Miller (more commonly known as “Miz Pete”) always reminded us about the diversity of that southside neighborhood in its earliest days. Among the groups she recalled were African Americans, Jews, Irish, Germans, Italians, Greeks and Appalachians, all of them seeking a new life and new opportunities through the gateway that was the old Southside.



A few of the remaining southside homes, now in the shadows of Lucas Oil Stadium.

Although we acknowledge and honor the wide range of people who once lived on the Southside, for the purposes of this project (which began its life as a one-semester student research undertaking), we have focused on the experiences of two groups in particular: the Jewish and African-American communities. And, within the Jewish community, we have

concentrated particularly, though not exclusively, on the perspectives of Sephardic Jews—that is, Jews who trace their origins back to Spain and Portugal prior to the Inquisition in Spain in 1492. The Southside Sephardic community arrived in Indianapolis from two cities that were once located in the Ottoman Empire where their families had lived for many generations after fleeing Spain—Monastir, now known as Bitola and located in southern Macedonia, and Salonika (Thessaloniki), in northern Greece.

Why Indianapolis? No one knows exactly. In researching this question, we turned to the work of Jack Glazier, an anthropologist who also grew up on the Southside. In his book, *Dispersing the Ghetto: The Relocation of Jews Across America*, Glazier describes how the Industrial Relocation Office [IRO], an organization, founded in New York by German Jewish immigrants, aimed to prevent Jews from becoming “ghettoized” on the east coast by arranging for them to move to other parts of the United States. The German Jews, who were much more affluent and assimilated than many of the new arrivals, were concerned about the large numbers of much less educated and impoverished new arrivals, flooding into New York from Eastern Europe, Russia and the Ottoman Empire. They believed that large numbers of these populations clustering along the east coast would provoke an anti-Semitic response. So, their idea was to scatter groups of new immigrants around the country, in smaller concentrations and in smaller cities (Glazier 1998).

We have surmised that at least some members of the Sephardic community came to Indianapolis through the efforts of the IRO. One of our interviewees, Judge William Levy, recalled that his parents mentioned having been

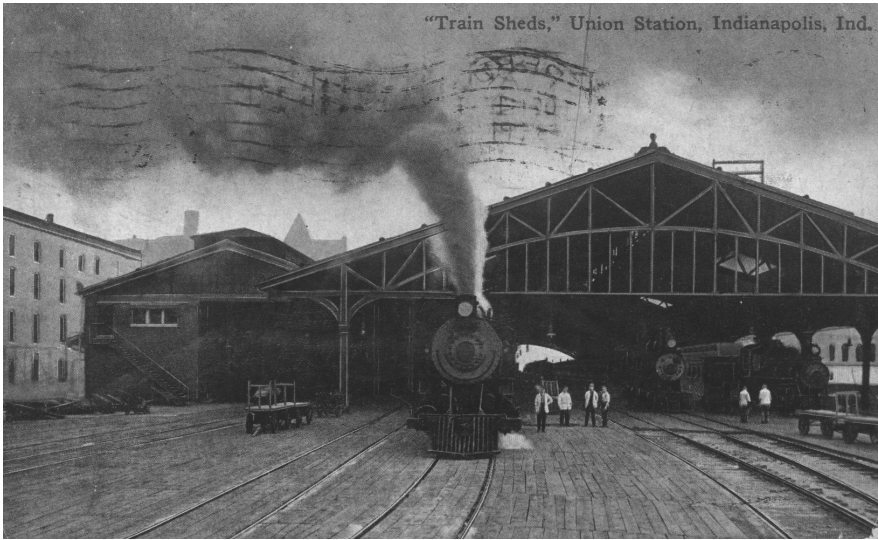
relocated to Indianapolis through the efforts of an agency in New York, which suggests that his family may have been moved through the work of the IRO.

The Near Southside was also home to another group of Jewish immigrants – the Ashkenazim. The Ashkenazic Jews came from other parts of Europe, particularly Eastern Europe and Russia. Communities of German and Ashkenazic Jews had actually been in Indianapolis since the mid-1880s (see Endelman 1984 for this history). When the Sephardic Jews began arriving around 1906, however, there was tension between the groups. The vernacular language of the Ashkenazic Jews was Yiddish, a form of German, and they did not regard the language and customs of the Sephardic Jews as authentically Jewish. (The Sephardim spoke a form of Spanish called Ladino). In fact, the earliest marriages between Sephardim and Ashkenazim caused some consternation in the community and in some families, the children from each of these communities were forbidden to even date one another. With time, however, these conflicts and differences abated and many of the families we interviewed had both Ashkenazic and Sephardic members.

We also focused on examining the history of the southside Sephardic community because the parents of all of the families who belonged to this community during our period of interest all came from either Monastir or Salonika. Therefore, it was relatively easy for us to trace out these tightly-knit networks. We certainly acknowledge, however, that the Ashkenazim also played a very important role in the Southside neighborhood and many of them owned the numerous businesses that once lined South Meridian, South Illinois and the other commercial thoroughfares. So, we have included many of their accounts in our story as well.

The African-Americans came to the Southside either from the South or from other industrial cities in the Midwest. At the time when most of the families from all groups settled on the Southside, the 19-teens and '20 up through the 1950s, Indianapolis was known as a center of commerce and jobs were plentiful. So, when the families, white and black, Christian and Jewish, arrived by train at the old Union Station, many of them decided to stay and make a new life here.

The two communities were not entirely coterminous in their residency on the Southside. African American families were certainly in the community as early as the 1920s and the period of greatest overlap between the Jewish and



Many members of both the Jewish and African American communities first arrived in Indianapolis by train from other cities in the United States.

African-American communities was mostly during the 1930s and '40s. In the period following World War II, however, the Jewish community began its migration north, aided by access to education and to new and better homes through the GI bill. They were also following the movement of the synagogues, community centers and other Jewish communal institutions that had already relocated to newer and more prosperous neighborhoods. A 1979 article in the *Indiana Star* describes the exodus of the Southside Jewish community. As the article states,

“Although most would agree that their lives are far better now than when they lived South of Monument Circle, many lamented some of the changes they’ve seen.

“Said one woman, ‘We were closer knit then. We were like one family and we knew everybody’” (Elrod 1979).

One of Buddy Yosha’s recollections supports that point. As he said to me, “We never sent out invitations to events until the 1960s—everyone just knew when something was happening—a wedding or a Bar Mitzvah— and everyone just knew they were invited.”

Many African American families also migrated north or to other parts of the city early on but others remained until I-70 cut a swathe through the



A 1979 article from the *Indianapolis Star* describes the exodus from the Southside Jewish community northward.

community, claiming many of their homes. Unlike the Jewish community, which is geographically concentrated around Hoover Road north of 64th St., the former southside African-Americans live in all parts of the city. But, there is one very important day of the year when they all come back to the Southside to celebrate the old neighborhood.

First Saturday in August



The Miller family reunites at the 2009 Babe Denny Picnic, wearing shirts that read "The House That Jack Built" in memory of Jack Miller who had passed away the previous winter.



It was a chance meeting with Jackie Bellamy, above, that launched this project.

The *Neighborhood of Saturdays* project began as so many of these kinds of community-based projects do: with a chance encounter. Actually, with two chance encounters. The first serendipitous meeting took place in June of 2008. I attended a workshop on applying for funds for community projects and began chatting with the woman seated next to me—I learned her name was Jacqueline (Miller) Bellamy. Jackie told me that she was hoping to locate resources in order to support an annual picnic held every year in Babe Denny Park (formerly known as Meikel St. Park), a small pocket park just south of downtown. Jackie told me that every year, on the first Saturday in August, former residents of this community gathered to recall and celebrate a neighbor-

hood that had been displaced by the construction of I-70 in the early 1970s. Although very few of the picnic attendees still lived in that area, between 200-300 former residents and their friends and families had been gathering in the park on that special day of the year for over 35 years, renewing their long-standing bonds of friendship and kinship.

Intrigued by the idea that there was a neighborhood where people still felt so intimately connected to one another despite their geographic dispersion across Indianapolis, I began to talk with members of Jackie's family, the Miller family, about working with students to put together an oral history about the neighborhood. Jackie's sister, Beverle Miller Kane, invited me to attend the First Saturday in August picnic later that summer, which I did. Accompanied by a friend who is a photographer, Angela Herrmann (who provided many of the photos for the events pictured in this introduction) and armed with a digital recorder, we roamed the picnic grounds, conducting informal interviews with the picnic participants. As Beatrice Miller, better known as "Miz Pete," put it,

"In the early 1970s, the interstate just came right across the community and what that did, it just divided our neighborhood... when the interstate came through, it separated us from all of our neighbors and friends. A lot of our friends had to leave, they were displaced and moved to other parts of town. And then our high school closed. So, the Southside Men's Club started the South Side Picnic Committee and it's a reunion. It's been going for 35 years. I'm gonna tell you right now that the picnic is a big part of what you're going to hear people talking about. If anyone ever asks you when the picnic is, just tell them it's the First Saturday in August, rain or shine and everyone is welcomed! As long as the park is there, we'll be having the picnic."

When talking about the photo of the Southside Men's Club, taken in the 1970s, Beverle Miller Kane adds that whenever you see a photo of a group of African-American men, it's usually a picture of a fraternity or a sports team or possibly a church group. "In this case," she explains, "this was a group of men who were dedicated to keeping the community together."

Most of the picnic attendees are African Americans—all linked through social and familial networks that have withstood the various displacements and relocations. Wandering around the grounds on that sunny and warm day in 2008, I began to ask people why they felt so very strongly about that lost community that they wished to keep its memory alive. As we were talking, it was hard for me to picture the residential community they remembered so fondly. Cars and trucks roared by the park on the ramps to I-70 and the park now abuts a number of industrial properties that were established after the Interstate was built. Lucas Oil Stadium, home of the Colts and host to the 2012 Super Bowl, towers over the neighborhood like a hulking giant and it is an open secret that many developers would love to take over the park space and use it for additional parking for the stadium attendees.



At the 2008 picnic, some of the founders of this event examine a 1975 photo of the men's group in which they were all featured. Left to right: Joseph "Jack" Miller, Robert (Skimp) Johnson, Sr., Donald Denny, John Mance ("Mancy") Calloway.



Photo of the Southside Men's Club, original founders of the Babe Denny Picnic, taken at the old downtown YMCA (now demolished) in 1975.



Oretha Harris and family celebrate together at the 2008 Babe Denny Picnic.



After the construction of I-70, the neighborhood was rezoned to allow for industrial development.

At that time, I assumed that the neighborhood had once been relatively homogeneous, primarily or exclusively African-American. I discovered that day how wrong I was! As I began conducting my informal interviews, picnic attendees began reminiscing about the multi-ethnic character of the neighborhood, about the ways that different groups lived side-

by-side from the 19-teens up to the 1960s, cooperating with one another as neighbors, attending school together and playing sports in the park and at the various community centers that once dotted the neighborhood. I was aware that, of course, the well-known Jewish-owned Shapiro's Deli still stands as a landmark at the corner of Meridian and McCarty Streets but it never occurred to me that this was a remnant of what I later learned had once been the center of Jewish communal life in the city of Indianapolis. And, as I waved my digital recorder under the noses of these kind and good-natured picnic celebrants, they began recalling with nostalgia their former Jewish neighbors. They mentioned names that (aside from Shapiro) were unfamiliar to me: names like



Southsiders Lee (Cohen) Mallah, and her sister Esther (Cohen) Calderon. Lee Mallah was our first link to the Sephardic community.

Passo, Calderon, Nahmias—I had never heard such surnames before. I filed this information in the back of my mind for possible future exploration. No one seemed to know exactly where these families had gone once they migrated north after World War II. And, I certainly had no idea where to find them, either.

And, this is where the second chance encounter occurred in Summer 2009. One afternoon, while shopping at a farmer's market at Illinois and 38th Streets, I spotted a stand called, "Lena's Mediterranean Kitchen." Curious, I



The delicious Sephardic treat, bourekas, for sale at the annual Etz Chaim bake sale.

meandered over and began examining the goodies on sale: savory pastries filled with spinach, meat, cheese, onions, called “bourekas” and “toursidas.” I began talking with the woman who was selling these delicious offerings about the origin of these dishes. She told me that her name was Lee Mallah, and that her family was Jewish originally from Salonika (Thessaloniki) in

northern Greece and that they’d come to Indianapolis from what had been the Ottoman Empire, prior to World War I. Suddenly, I flashed back to those curious surnames I’d collected at the picnic the summer before. By any chance, I asked Lee, did your family used to live on the near Southside? Why, yes, she told me, startled. And, thus, I realized that the curious names I had heard at the picnic belonged to Sephardic Jews.

After meeting Lee Mallah, and after she assured me that she could put me in touch with many other former southsiders, I went back to the Miller family and other members of the African-American southside community who were the initial planning committee, including William Craig, Robert and Anderson Murff, Pauline Finkton and John Mance (“Mancy”) Calloway, among others, to tell them about this encounter. I asked people how they would feel about broadening the project to include interviewing other former residents of the neighborhood, particularly members of the Sephardic community. They were somewhat surprised that I’d managed to track some of them down and were immediately enthusiastic and welcoming. And thus, we changed the name of the project from “First Saturday in August” to “The Neighborhood of Saturdays,” “Saturday” being a meaningful day for both communities—for the African Americans, it speaks to the importance of the First Saturday in August picnic and for the Jewish community, it honors the importance of Saturday as the Sabbath. We began laying the groundwork for bringing back together the former Southsiders in order to record their stories.

"A Guy That Everybody Liked"
Charlie Wiggins & African-American Racing
By Benjamin J. Linder



This well-known photo of Charlie Wiggins appears on his gravestone at Crown Hill cemetery.

Chalie Wiggins—or the “Negro Speed King,” as he came to be called—exists as one of the most important and ground-breaking African Americans to work on the Southside. Born in Evansville, Indiana in 1897, Wiggins grew up the poor son of a coalminer. In 1917, a local car repair shop hired Wiggins as an apprentice, and this work would serve as the auspicious first step in a lifetime of car racing

and maintenance.

In 1922, Wiggins struck out for Indianapolis with his wife, Roberta Sulenger. Within a couple of years, the couple had opened their own garage on the Southside, and Wiggins quickly became the city’s leading mechanic. John “Mancy” Calloway remembers the garage well:

“When I was about six or seven years old, my brother would take me about everywhere. I recall going back [Wiggins’] garage, about 3 ½ blocks from where I was born.”

A racing enthusiast, Wiggins eventually managed to develop his own car—the “Wiggins Special”—from parts he collected at local auto junkyards. Wiggins dreamed of entering the most prestigious car race, the Indianapolis 500, but the racial bigotry of the times thwarted this dream. The American Automobile Association refused him entry on the basis of his racing. In a particularly cruel corollary to this story, many of the all-white racing teams sought after Wiggins to work on their cars despite his lack of access to race. After all, Wiggins had an outstanding reputation as an auto mechanic, but the racial prejudices of the league put Wiggins in a difficult position. As Mr. Calloway said, “He couldn’t be seen out in the open working on [the cars].”

Still determined to race, Wiggins and other African-American drivers formed their own racing league, and Wiggins performed extremely well in the races they held across the Midwest. Eventually, William Rucker, a wealthy African American in Indianapolis, established the Gold and Glory Sweepstakes. The 100-mile race showcased African-American racers annually on a dirt track at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. Although Wiggins did not race in the first Gold and Glory Sweepstakes in 1924, the event drew 12,000 spectators to the Fairgrounds, the largest showing for an African-American sporting event to that point.

In 1936, Wiggins’ racing career ended when he crashed at the Gold and Glory Sweepstakes. The race cost him one of his legs. Although he persevered

and even built himself a wooden leg, he was never able to race again. Mr. Calloway recalled, "He wanted to keep driving, but he couldn't."

Throughout his career, Wiggins faced a great deal of racial discrimination. The Indiana Ku Klux Klan attacked him and vandalized his house on numerous occasions. Undeterred, he continued to work on cars and fight for African American participation in racing even after the tragic loss of his leg. In 1979, he died in Indianapolis at the age of 82.

John Calloway remembers Charlie Wiggins as a friendly man who always welcomed the neighborhood children on the Southside. "He knew most of us by name." Even beyond the Southside, though, Calloway said Wiggins was a model citizen: "He was a guy that everybody liked, not only in the [southside] neighborhood, but all types of people."

Reunion: How We Came Back Together



"Miz Pete" Miller and Jack Alboher get reacquainted at the first joint planning meeting, held at the Concord Neighborhood Center in December 2009.

Our first joint community meeting to begin planning the project took place at the Concord Neighborhood Center in December 2009. Despite the cold weather about 25 people turned out. Representing the Sephardic community at that first meeting was Jack Alboher—when he walked into the gym, everyone rushed over to greet him. "Hey, you still owe me money!" chuckled John Mance Calloway (Mancy), recalling some incident from their youth. The next meeting was in January 2010 at Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation. This time, we had excellent representation from both communities. People greeted one another excitedly, reminiscing about the schools they had

attended (the southside primary schools were never officially segregated) and the businesses they all remembered patronizing. And, from that time on, all of the former Southsiders, both Jewish and African American, insisted on meeting together to plan all of our activities.



Gladys Cohen Nisenbaum and "Miz Pete" discover their shared connections at an early planning meeting in 2010.

In Spring 2010, a group of students who had signed up for my community research class began conducting and transcribing interviews with Southsiders from both communities. We also initiated our tradition of "scan-a-thons." Several times during the semester, we would announce that we would have portable scanners and laptops available at particular times and dates and

places and we would invite people to bring their old photos and other memorabilia. We would then scan and catalogue all of these items, which are now displayed on-line through the IUPUI University Library Web site. (You can see over 400 of these historic photos at <http://ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections/NoS>) We were very fortunate that the Digital Libraries Team from IUPUI's University Library, headed up by Kristi Palmer and including Anna Proctor and Jennifer Johnson, assisted us in developing a systematic way to scan and catalogue these images. Tony Stamatoplos, anthropologist and social science librarian, also assisted us in figuring out ways to integrate the use of these photos within the context of our larger research project.

Because there were so many former Southsiders who wanted to be interviewed, we continued the research with a new class in Spring 2011. From the very beginning of this undertaking, the Concord Neighborhood Center has been a key partner. Located just south of the old neighborhood, the research classes met regularly at the Concord. Executive Director Niki Girls and her staff were always welcoming and accommodated our needs, despite the range of other activities always going on at the center. Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation welcomed us and hosted many meetings and scan-a-thons. And, South Calvary Missionary Baptist Church was also a special place for us.

At the end of each of the classes, May 2010 and May 2011, we held receptions where large numbers of former southsiders from both communities came together to hear the students present what they had learned from their interviews and archival work. The May 2011 reception was particularly memorable because



Southsiders' photos await scanning so that they can be permanently preserved as part of the IUPUI Digital Scholarship archive.



Lee Mallah revisits old photos at one of the Etz Chaim scan-a-thons with student David Plasterer.

the students put together an oral history play, based on quotations from their interviews. The performance was enlivened musical numbers, led by David Plasterer and Anne Waxingmoon; we performed the Sephardic folksong, *Las Tiyas* (The Aunts), in Ladino; we sang the Black Spiritual, "This Little Light of Mine." And perhaps the high point of the performance was when we all joined together to sing the Manual High School fight song of 1949, which Anne and David had researched and learned and had taught to the rest of us. The chapter on Schools will cover more of this history; suffice it to say that many audience members had attended Manual High School (at its original location on the near Southside) and the song brought back many treasured memories for them.



Students perform a musical number as part of the 2011 class oral history play, based on their interviews about the Southside.



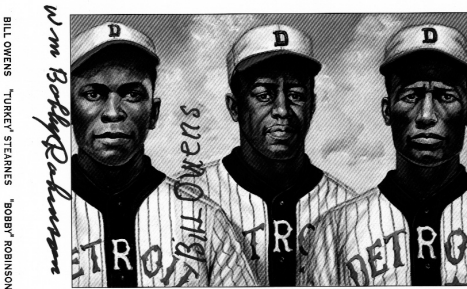
Southsiders gather in July 2011 to talk about the project and plan the next steps.

As the communities renewed their relationships with one another, old friendships were revived, giving us the feeling that through the project, the spirit of the old Southside was being recreated anew. Our meetings were invariably lively discussions and every meeting had to begin with attendees going around the circle to share their original southside addresses. Discussions were laced with laughter. On once occasion, for example, when we were planning a week-end of interfaith activities at the synagogue and at South Calvary Baptist Church, members of the Sephardic community were animatedly explaining to their African Americans friends that at Etz Chaim, men and women are seated separately. “Well, we’re already practicing,” said Cleo Moore, engendering a wave of laughter as we all noticed that he and his wife, Normajo, were seated at opposite ends of the table.

The students got to work scheduling their interviews, and many southsiders not only welcomed them into their homes and hearts—they also provided refresh-

ments and neighborhood tours. Many of the students who have participated in this project have felt so attached to many of the people they interviewed—and to the story of the Southside—that they have continued to be involved and to volunteer their time with this project long after having completed their commitments for the classes. Everyone who has taken part in this venture has been “infected” with the spirit of unity and cohesion that emanates from the southsiders and the stories.

Bill Owens
“Whatever you do, go to school”



A postcard of Bill Owens, shown here with fellow members of the Negro League Team, the Detroit Stars.

Another notable southside resident was William “Bill” Owens, an African-American baseball player who enjoyed a successful athletic career in the Negro League. Owens grew up in Indianapolis and dropped out of school after completing the sixth grade. In 1923, he dedicated himself to a career in baseball.

Throughout his life, Bill Owens played for the Washington Potomacs, the Indianapolis ABCs, the Memphis Red Sox, and many other Negro League teams. He ended his baseball career in 1933 as a player for the Detroit Stars.

After his athletic career ended, Owens returned to his native Indianapolis, where he opened and operated a pool hall and tavern. Henry Dabney fondly remembers that establishment:

“I left the Southside in 1947 and that’s when I got married. But my parents lived there and at the time Bill Owens’ tavern was still there. That’s where the guys were hanging out. On the corner of Kenwood and Ray St.”

The construction of I-70, which proved so detrimental to the whole Southside, forced Owens to close his tavern in 1965. He went on to work with children, teaching them to paint, play baseball, and shoot pool. Regretful of his own lack of education, Owens also preached the importance of school:

“I always tell them, ‘Whatever you do, go to school, go to school. I only went through sixth grade. I was so wrapped up in my success, I didn’t realize how important school was.’”

Owens, with the help of his family and fellow community members, received an honorary general equivalency diploma in 1996.

He died in 1999 at the age of 98.

A Visit from the New York Times



Jackie Bellamy (seated) welcomes former southsiders Becky Profeta (left) and Annie Calderon to South Calvary Baptist Church.



Al Passo and Arthur Dabney at the Etz Chaim scan-a-thon of August 2011

One of the highlights of our work on this project took place in March 2012, when we had a visit from *New York Times* religion columnist Samuel G. Freedman. Actually, Mr. Freedman's visit was originally scheduled for August 2011. At the last minute, Mr. Freedman was unable to travel to Indianapolis because of Hurricane Irene. All of the flights had been canceled and all of the rental cars had been taken. Nonetheless, it was too late to call off our events, so we went ahead with our original plans. On a warm Sunday afternoon, we had our biggest scan-a-thon ever—about 60 people brought photos and other material to Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation and shared their stories with us and with one another.

We rescheduled our visit with Mr. Freedman for March, and exhilarated by the success of our previously planned activities, we organized another, even more ambitious week-end of events. On Saturday morning, March 10th, everyone was invited to attend services at Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation. We were joined by several African Americans including, to our delight, Reverend John W. Woodall, Jr. from South Calvary Baptist Church. Following the service, we were served a wonderful Sephardic lunch, prepared by the Deborah Sisterhood of Etz. Chaim. (We do not have photos of our events on Saturday at Etz Chaim because of the prohibition



Annie Calderon and Gladys Cohen Nisenbaum fondly remember their former classmates from School #22.



Old friends William Levy and Henry Dabney worship together at South Calvary Missionary Baptist Church.

against work on Sabbath, which includes photography). That Sunday was our big event: a Passover/Easter service at South Calvary, led by Reverend Woodall and with music provided by the South Calvary men's choir. We all joined together to sing spirituals that were familiar to everyone and following the service, we enjoyed a wonderful (Kosher!) lunch together in the church hall. Sergeant Kim Mayfield prepared and graciously presented community service awards for businesses and institutions that had been particularly active and supportive of the project. These included South Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church, Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation, Concord Neighborhood Center, Craig Funeral Home

and the IUPUI Department of Anthropology.

Following the lunch, our final event of the week-end was to take Mr. Freedman on a tour of the old Southside. Unfortunately, the locations where many of the most beloved landmarks once stood are now empty lots. The Concord Neighborhood Center donated the use of their large purple school bus and Anthropology MA student Kirsten Lewis prepared a map. We saw Mr. Freedman off to the airport at the end of this busy week-end and were thrilled with his article about our project, which appeared in the *New York Times* on April 8th, 2012. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/07/us/in-indianapolis-southside-neighborhood-a-reunion-of-traditions-on-religion.html>)



New York Times columnist Samuel G. Freedman talks to "Miz Pete" Miller at the South Calvary luncheon.

Kim Mayfield (right), on behalf of the project, presents a Community Service Award for South Calvary Church to Reverend John W. Woodall, Jr. (left).



As we continued to work and plan together, community residents began to attend each other's events outside of the project-related activities. Scott Nahmias, from the Sephardic community, came to the First Saturday in August picnic last summer. The Sephardic community also has a tradition of summer picnics, held on the 4th of July, and this year, Beverle Miller Kane, (Ellen) Janie Craig (Johnson) and Letha Johnson Beverly attended that picnic. A delegation of Jewish residents also participated in a service at South Calvary in celebration of their 135th anniversary as a congregation.

By coincidence, in 2011, the Indiana Historical Society began preparing for an exhibit called, "You Were There: Making A Jewish Home 1950." The exhibit tells the story of the Kaplan family, survivors of a concentration camp, who were relocated to Indianapolis' Southside in late 1940s. A very diverse group of southsiders came to celebrate the opening of the exhibit and to meet a member of the Kaplan family, Rosie Kaplan, who had gone to school with some of the project participants. Once they began coming back together, fifty years later, people recreated and relived the sense of community and cooperation that they had remembered so fondly from 50 years earlier.

21



Southsiders with Mr. Samuel G. Freedman, pouring off of the Concord purple school bus following the tour of southside landmarks.



Southsiders gather to celebrate the opening of the Indiana Historical Society exhibit, "Making a Jewish Home 1950."

Final Thoughts About this Book and this Project

For me as a faculty member, my involvement with this project has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. The chapters of this book were all based on student research. Editorial and research assistants Ben Linder and Margaret Baurley took on the task of editing all of the chapters and carrying out additional research, including conducting interviews the students had not been able to carry out during the spring 2010 and 2011 courses. Although there is some repetition among the chapters and there is some inconsistency in the style of each chapter, since this was primarily a student project, we left some of these quirks in this final version.



Student Lindsay Schaiper and Etz Chaim member Sadelle Ray are happy to see one another at the 2010 Etz Chaim annual bake sale.

In discussions with my former colleague from IUPUI, Susan Sutton, I discovered that her 1998 Urban Anthropology class had done research on the Southside neighborhood (which became known as the Babe Denny neighborhood in the 1970s, after the park was renamed after Mr. Edward Bay “Babe” Denny (see chapter 4). Susan gave us her students’ papers and archives and we were able to build on this material in our work.

All of the historical photos and other documents in this book were contributed by former Southsiders at our scan-a-thons. Most of the photos of contemporary events were taken by Angela Herrmann. I would particu-

larly like to thank Ben Linder, whose dedication to seeing this book completed kept me going. IUPUI students Maggy Baurley, Ryan Logan, Anne Waxing-moon and Kirsten Lewis continued their involvement with this project long after their academic obligations to the coursework had been fulfilled.

One of the sad aspects of this project has been the loss of several participants along the way. Jack Alboher, who attended our very first planning meeting at the Concord Center in December 2009, passed away in fall 2011; we also

lost Pauline (Raine) Finkton, who was one of our most dedicated and active participants in the project from the very beginning. Although Jack Miller passed away before students had a chance to interview him, he was excited about this project and had been a founder of the Southside picnic. Rosetta Crain was interviewed at the first picnic I attended in 2008 and all of the students in both of the classes read the reminiscences recorded by Jessie Clark. Just this past spring, we mourned the loss of Anderson “Homer” Murff, a dedicated interviewee for both the 2010 and 2011 classes, and Meyer Nahmias, who was interviewed by students in the 2011 class. We regret their absences as this book, to which they were all dedicated, becomes a reality at last.

Niki Girls, Executive Director of the Concord Neighborhood Center and her staff, particularly Lisa Arnold, Cindy Turentine, (aka CB, our “tour bus” driver), Lynn Rogers and Cil Flannery accommodated all of our requests with extreme graciousness. We held classes, scan-a-thons and many meetings there and worked around the busy activities that characterize life at the Concord.

Both South Calvary Missionary Baptist Church and Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation hosted several meetings and events. The Deborah Sisterhood of Etz Chaim went out of their way to prepare delicious Sephardic specialties for us to enjoy and Etz Chaim president Alan Cohen helped us with all of our arrangements. Cleo and Normajo Moore helped us organize our meetings and events at South Calvary and Reverend Woodall always welcomed us warmly. David Yosha graciously donated his time to videotape some of our events.

The initial funding for this book was provided through a Venture Grant administered by the IUPUI Solution Center. When people in the community decided they wanted to plan a more ambitious publication, they organized an extraordinary fundraising drive. William Levy and William Craig were our fundraising co-chairs and we were overwhelmed by the response to our appeal. There is a complete list of contributors to this endeavor at the back of the book. We have included everyone who donated not only funds but also time, energy and other resources. We cannot thank you all enough.

Several other people and centers at IUPUI were also instrumental in helping us carry out this work. The Office for Service and Learning funded several experienced students who served as Service Learning Assistants for the class. The Office for Research and Learning funded a MURI (Multi-disciplinary Undergraduate Research Institute) project undertaken in conjunction

with this research. Deans Blomquist and Wokeck in the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI have been unfailingly supportive, as has Paul Mullins, Chair of the Department of Anthropology. I would also like to give a shout-out to fellow anthropologist Luke Eric Lassiter, whose remarkable project and book, *The Other Side of Middletown*, paved the way for this and other community-based research endeavors.



Students Jessica Forthoffer and Mercedes Cannon with Henrietta Schwartz Mervis at the 2011 class reception and oral history play.

Lastly, throughout this process I have been aware that this book constitutes a tribute to a very special time and place, a time and place that is still deeply treasured by those whose stories are included in this book. The students and I were honored and humbled to be entrusted with the responsibility of telling their stories, and we hope the final product has lived up to the expectations of the former southsiders. As

Beverle Miller Kane put it regarding the community's feelings about this project, "We are so proud and bursting with new life! We now have a vehicle to have our story heard."

For those of you whose stories appear in this book, we cannot thank you enough for sharing your precious memories with us. For those readers who did not live on the old Southside, we invite you to see this book as an exemplar of what is best in all of us—as a model for reaching across racial and religious boundaries to support one another as members of one community. Let us hope that in reading about the experiences of this one neighborhood's past, we may also find meaningful lessons about how to live together, with mutual respect, regard and affection, long into the future.

CHAPTER 1

“Little By Little, We Came”

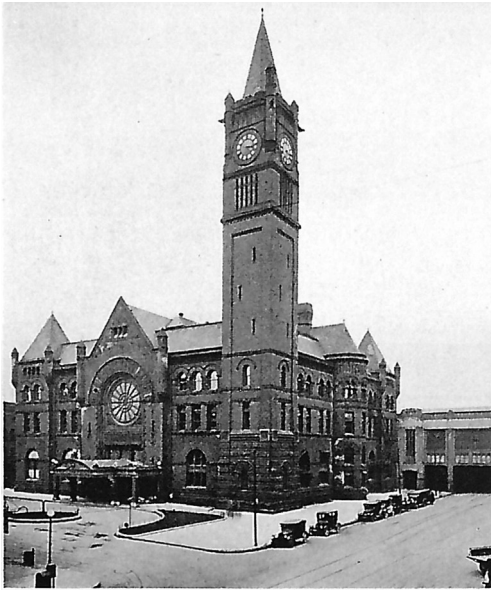
Immigration, Migration and the Making of a Multi-ethnic Southside
By Mercedes Cannon, Jessica Forthoffer and Kenji Townsend

Introduction

The Southside of Indianapolis was shaped by the histories of Jewish immigrants and African American migrants. Both of these groups were instrumental in forming the identity of their community. While the two groups initially came to the Southside for unique reasons and made their way into Indianapolis via various paths, they also shared common themes. It was these common themes that allowed these two communities to cohere into a unified neighborhood in the early 20th century. The routes taken by each of these populations helped define both groups and also connected them to one another. The journey to the Southside began in other parts of the world and in very different parts of the United States. The migration stories of southside families occurred at times in history when many other people were also seeking new opportunities in the United States. This chapter will document the various migrations that led to the development of a remarkable Indianapolis community.

The Jewish immigration story begins in Europe. Early migration into the Southside was initiated largely by Germans, both Jewish and non-Jewish, many of whom were driven out of Europe by religious intolerance and by the upheavals created by the Napoleonic Wars in the 1800s. These immigrants came from their homeland with financial capital to found businesses and farms in their new home. Given its rapid growth as a Midwestern urban

center, its central geographic location within the United States, and its fertile farmland, Indianapolis provided an ideal locale for these European immigrants. The first Irish immigrants joined the predominantly German neighborhood in the 1830s, prompted by poverty and famine in Ireland. At this time in the city's relatively young life, the growth of the city was stymied by the fact that early settlers discovered that the White River was too shallow to be navigable by cargo ships, which made transportation of goods a serious problem. For Irish immigrants, the draw to Indianapolis in particular was based on job opportunities in the construction of roadways and railroads. These arter-



UNION PASSENGER STATION



Picnics—Try a Whole One Boiled

Union Train Station, the last stop for many Southsiders on their journeys to Indianapolis. This photo appeared in a Souvenir of Indianapolis booklet published by the Kingan Company, a meatpacking house.

ies were designed to connect Indianapolis with the rest of Indiana as well as with the rest of the country, establishing its niche as the “Crossroads of America” in the expanding national economy. Immigration to the Southside was not limited to populations outside of the United States. Southern Blacks would also begin to move north in great numbers, seeking employment and a refuge from intolerance after Emancipation, even while new legislation would serve to sustain continued discrimination.

In the 1830s, President Andrew Jackson was fighting the difficult foes of economic expansion and inflation that would later result in the Great Depression. World Wars I and II would push even more immigrants to seek a safe haven in the United States, and some would make their home in

fledgling Indianapolis. While these historical trajectories shaped the identity of the whole city, as well as of the larger nation and even the world, Indianapolis' Southside neighborhood formed their own special niche as they carved out their own inclusive communal identity in the midst of adversity.

Early Migration: Fleeing Discrimination and Oppression

For the Sephardic Jews, the outbreak of World War I (1914-1918) was pivotal. The shifting of regional boundaries and alliances in Yugoslavia, the Ottoman Empire, Turkey, and Greece caused many of the Sephardic people of those areas to migrate once again to flee the repercussions of war. The African-American community of the Southside began their migration to Indianapolis during what many refer to as the “Great Migration”—or the “Exodus”—that occurred after the American Civil War during Reconstruction. A great number of former slave families migrated in those years to seek employment and a better life in the more industrialized North. Indianapolis became one such destination.



Cleo Moore stands by a cotton field in Canton, Mississippi, where his family once lived. This picture was taken on a 1972 visit back to his birthplace.

Before the Civil War, African Americans were “tolerated” in Indianapolis, but the city still discouraged their settlement (Louvenbruck, 1974). Nevertheless, the 1840s and 50s saw a large influx of Southern Black refugees. The end of the Civil War and the enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation attracted more African Americans from southern states during the late 19th century. As the Great Depression swept the country in the 1930s, even more people sought refuge from unmerci-

fully exploitative labor and joblessness. In addition to notable South-to-North migrations, a more general shift occurred from rural to urban areas. Many people who settled in Indianapolis simply stopped mid-journey. Indianapolis

sometimes served as a layover of sorts on the way to larger cities like Chicago, but many families remained in the city instead of continuing on to their original destinations. The influx of African Americans into Indianapolis by the hundreds took place between the 1840s and 1850s (Louvenbruck 9). They settled on the Southside, and by 1875, South Calvary Baptist Church was erected for Blacks to provide spiritual encouragement and assistance with social and economic issues (Louvenbruck 9). The church was a pillar of the community as well as a sign of strength and encouragement for the African American residents (Thornbrough 6-7).

By the dawn of World War II, large numbers of immigrants were arriving to the United States, usually coming ashore in New York, and the government called upon churches and organizations to help. One such organization, the Industrial Relocation Organization (or IRO) was established in New York in 1901 and was active until 1918. The goal of the IRO was the assimilation of Jewish immigrants into American culture and the increase in Jewish migration in this period from Eastern Europe and Russia, as well as the arrival of the so-called "Oriental" Jews, the Sephardim, concerned the more established German Jews. They were worried that the poverty and religious Orthodoxy of these Yiddish and Ladino populations would create "ghettos" along the east coast, thereby fomenting anti-Semitic sentiment. To avoid these consequences, the IRO dispersed the Jewish immigrants who arrived in New York to other cities around the United States (see Glazier 1998). After World War II, the Displaced Persons Act (1948), revised in 1950, would grant permanent residence to European refugees formerly permitted to reside in the United States only for a limited time.

The people who took up residence on the Southside had a variety of reasons for doing so, but many chose Indianapolis because there were opportunities for employment. Some came because it was on the way to somewhere else, others came because of proximity to the places from which they had departed, some came because they had family already settled in the area, and still others chose to settle on the Southside because of the sense of community cohesion. Former southside resident Robert Murff explained:

"Everyone had their reasons for being drawn into this area. You had Whites who were working in the coal mines in Kentucky and West Virginia; Blacks in the South that were basically share-croppers; and you had oppressed Jews coming from Europe and the East Coast – all coming into this area."

The larger events surrounding the migration of populations into Indianapolis had a global impact, and while our focus lies with these two communities, many others have been similarly affected by these histories. Whether the journey was long or short, the American Dream was alluring to all because it offered a chance to own land, find employment, and prosper financially.

The Sephardic Jews who came to the Southside trace their origin to Spain and Portugal prior to the Inquisition. In 1492, the Catholic monarchs, of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella, intensified their on-going efforts to force Jews to either convert to Catholicism or leave the country. They issued the Edict of Expulsion, which compelled the hasty flight from Spain of around 200,000 Portuguese and Spanish Jews.

Meanwhile, on the other side of Europe, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, which then included the lands we now know as Greece, Turkey, Macedonia and other parts of the Balkans, issued a formal invitation to those Jews who had been expelled from Spain and Portugal, urging them to come and settle in the areas he ruled, and large numbers of Sephardic Jews availed themselves of this opportunity.

These communities brought with them their own vernacular language, a form of Spanish called “Ladino,” which soon incorporated words from Turkish, Greek and other local languages, along with their own particular set of religious practices. In relation to the other great Empires of 19th century Europe, the Muslim Ottomans were rather tolerant of religious diversity and both Jews and Christians fared relatively well in this environment. In any case, they did not experience the kinds of pogroms or violent attacks that Jews were subjected to in other parts of Europe. In the run-up to World War I, however, there was a decision to begin drafting non-Muslims into the Turkish army. As the dark shadows of war fell across Europe, many Sephardic Jews from the Ottoman Empire were driven to seek safer refuge in the United States, joining the flow of other waves of immigrants from Europe and elsewhere.

The geographic and linguistic origins of the Sephardim distinguish them from the Ashkenazi Jews, whose origins are with Yiddish-speaking Jews of Eastern Europe. The language of the Sephardim is Ladino, a Romance language derived from Old Castilian Spanish. Ladino is sometimes referred to as “*el espanol maestro*”—“Our Spanish”—and is central to the Sephardic identity. When the Jews were expelled from Spain, they carried “their” Spanish with them, and so their language bound them to their Jewish heritage and to Spain (Kushner 2011).

Many of the Sephardic elders still use some Ladino and recall speaking it at home as children. Gladys (Cohen) Nisenbaum recalled:

“My older sister and I—when we didn’t want the kids to know what we were saying, we would speak in Ladino. It’s interesting how when we are together in a big group there are little instances where we will still say something that is all in Spanish.”

The Sephardim in Indianapolis mainly immigrated to the United States from two places that had once been part of the Ottoman Empire: Monastir, now located in present-day Macedonia, and Salonika (Thessaloniki), in northern Greece. Judge William Levy told us about how his family arrived in the United States. As he tells it,

“My father was born in the town of Monastir, Yugoslavia which was then a part of the Ottoman Empire. It is believed that he immigrated to the United States around 1910-1911 and settled in the New York City area, working in a variety of jobs, including manning hat check concessions in night clubs catering to various ethnic groups: Greek, Arabic, etc. He, like so many others of the era, was conversational in seven different languages. He returned to the United States around 1913 and was resettled by a Jewish agency in New York to Indianapolis, where a large number of Sephardic Jews from Monastir and Salonika had already been sent and settled.”



Monastir, a town in southern Macedonia, now known as Bitola, in 1918. It was once part of the Ottoman Empire and was the birthplace of many of the Sephardic immigrants to Indianapolis.



A Jewish mother and daughter in Salonika, Greece (now known as Thessaloniki), a point of origin for some of the Sephardic families on the Southside.

The majority of the Jewish migration out of Monastir took place between 1900 and 1915. The outbreak of World War I and the second Balkan War in 1913 were catalysts for the vast emigration of the Sephardim out of the region. At the turn of the 20th century, Monastir's Jewish population had reached 11,000, but by 1914, years of emigration had reduced the population to just over 6,000. The city of Salonika (Thessaloniki), in Greece, was an even larger center of activity for the Sephardic community in this region of the world. The city carried the nickname of *La Madre de Israel*—"Israel's Mother." In 1900 approximately 80,000 of the 173,000 people in Thessaloniki were Jewish (Museo

Djidio De Salonik/Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki). Many members of the Sephardic community in Indianapolis also trace their origins to Salonika.

While the recently settled Sephardim formed new communities in Indianapolis, they missed their homes in Salonika and Monastir. Therefore, the Sephardic immigrants tended to cluster together. Steve Calderon, whose father Charlie was born in Monastir, recalled the Madison Apartment building, which was home to many Jewish families. Contact with friends and family back home proved difficult, especially in the early days of immigration to Indianapolis. Alvin Mordoh's family had the only phone to call back to the old country. Sidney Eskenazi illustrated the longing for home among the Jewish immigrants as well as the romanticized vision of Europe that developed among the community elders:

A cancelled stamp from Monastir, possibly on a letter from the old country to family in America.



“We were from Salonika. My uncle used to tell me the stories about how wonderful things were in the old country, how the grapes were bigger and everybody had a good time, and they sang and they danced. And I said, ‘But, gee, if things were so good, why did you all leave?’ He says, ‘Well, that’s the way I try to remember it.’ He said, ‘Things weren’t really that good - in fact, if you want to know the truth,’ he says, ‘We came to this country because we were reaching the age where you had to go in the Turkish Army.’ He said, ‘Believe me, the Turkish Army was no place for a Jewish boy.’”

Meanwhile, the United States was experiencing its own discriminatory practices and agricultural woes. The movement of over two million African Americans out of the American South to the industrialized North, known as the Great Migration, took place between 1910 and 1930. The subsequent increase of racial prejudice, supported by discriminatory legislation such as the Jim Crow laws (1876-1965), were designed to suppress African Americans and relegate them to second-class citizenship. Economic factors that resulted from these practices as well



Several African-American families, including the Moores, came to Indianapolis from places like Canton, Mississippi, in search of better opportunities for their families.

as from agricultural factors prompted Southern families to move in search of employment opportunities in the North. A boll weevil infestation destroyed Southern farms in 1910 and the Mississippi flooded in 1927. Increasingly difficult employment conditions forced sharecroppers to search for better opportunities in the North, where there was a labor shortage after immigration laws kept out more European immigrants after World War I.

Approximately 500,000 African-American Southerners made the trek between 1916 and 1919, and twice that many

moved north in the following decade. Chicago alone received approximately 50,000 to 75,000 African-American newcomers (Grossman, 1996:34). Cycles of migration from these early decades into the 1970s resulted in new concentrations of African Americans from the rural South in the urban North. While cities in the South attracted many black men and women from the nearby countryside, the best opportunities could be found in the North. Not only were wages higher in northern states, southern cities offered no respite from discriminatory legislation, economically depressed schools, and second-class citizenship. Northward migration, therefore, was seen by some as a “Second Emancipation” (Grossman 1996:34).

The African-American population in the North had grown tremendously by the time Robert Moore’s parents were old enough to make the trip. Robert Moore recalled the story of their migration from the South:

“There was racial prejudice there, so my big family was tempted to get away from the environment that we were in. We came up here just little by little. We couldn’t afford to come all at once, so my father’s brother came and my father’s sister came prior, and my older brother, they came, and little by little, we came. So it just so happened that my uncle and aunt came first, and I don’t know why they chose here, but that’s the reason we chose here. We came and stayed with them until we could afford to move into our own dwelling.”



A postcard mailed from Memphis, Tennessee in 1911, showing the transportation of cotton in the south.

Building the Community

African-American and Jewish southsiders built organizations and partnerships to aid in the development of their community. The influx of Jewish citizens into Indianapolis created a need for organizations designed to help them settle into their new urban homes. In 1856, the first Jewish congregation, the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (IHC), was organized. The IHC's early accomplishments were the formation of the Jewish Welfare Federation (JWF). Rabi Morris Feuerlicht and other well-known Jews such as Mayer Messing, Samuel Rauh, and Gustave A. Elfroymsen worked to help recent immigrants adapt to and learn Indianapolis ways. The Jewish community would build several associations and organizations in their new Indianapolis neighborhood to help their assimilation into American culture. In 1914, the Jewish Federation built a settlement house on the Southside, on Morris Street. Affectionately known as the "Communal Building" (always pronounced with the emphasis on the "com"), that facility provided a range of services for the new immigrants, ranging from English and citizenship classes, to well baby clinics, to social activities. (Marion County History). Sue Shapiro Prince remembers how these types of organizations helped her family get settled in Indianapolis. She said,

"Both of my parents came to this country after World War I. My mother was 17 or 18 when she came here by herself. My father was only two years old when he came here from Russia, and then [he] came to Indianapolis. [...] My father's father—my grandfather—had friends who had lived, who had resettled in Lafayette, Indiana so they chose to come here."

According to Sue Shapiro Prince, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) "didn't want everyone just going to New York. Which you know, most and many of them did, so they [the IRO] were trying to fan them out across the country, so that's how my grandparents ended up [in Indiana]."

As their Jewish brethren formed organizations to ease transitions from other parts of the world, the African American community sought similar avenues to fight against discrimination in the United States. Through their perseverance and education, the Black community built a base of Black physicians and lawyers who would take the lead in the struggle against legalized social segregation practices in housing, schools, and public facilities. These

ROYAUME DE GRECE

AU NOM
DU
GOVERNEMENT

Nous certifions l'identité de la photographie
contre apposée et de la Signature ci dessus.
Le Préfet

No 1899

Signalement

Age 21

Taille 1m 70

Cheveux châtains

Yeux id

Nez droit

Bouche bonne

Signes Particuliers

Commune Salonique

Domicile Salonique

Réquerons tous les officiers, civils et militaires, du
Royaume de Grèce, et prie ceux des pays amis de laisser
passer librement M^{lle} Regina Camhi

se rendant en Amerique
pour ses affaires personnelles sans
qu' il soit empêché ni molesté par personne, et de lui
prêter aide et protection, en cas de besoin.

A cet effet nous avons délivré le présent, signé par
nous.

Salonique, le 3^e Août 1922

Par autorisation du Ministre des Affaires Etrangères

LE PREFET

G. Paragoropoulos

Le porteur est obligé de se
présenter dans trois jours au
Consulat Hellénique le plus
proche au lieu de destination
et en cas de départ de faire vi-
ser le passeport au Consulat
Hellénique local.

1722
1162

Immigration papers belonging to Regina (Camhi) Cohen, mother of Lee (Cohen) Mal-
lah, who set sail from Salonika to come to the United States in 1922. Regina Camhi's
photo can be see at the top of the document.

were professionals who had already put together their own club and later
became affiliated with the Black National Medical Association and the
National Bar Association. African Americans utilized the leaders of these orga-
nizations to help actively fight against the racial discrimination they were expe-
riencing (Thornbrough 6).

Prejudice was a driving force bringing both Jews and African Americans to the Southside, and this shared experience created a bond.

All of the migrants and immigrants were seeking job opportunities and upward socioeconomic mobility, both of which proved elusive in a time of war, discrimination, industrial upheaval, and economic depression. One of the most common threads spanning residents of all ethnicities that who took up residence on the Southside was the search for employment opportunities. Union Station, which served as a portal for trains from across the nation, had a great deal to do with the large number of immigrants who ended up settling in Indianapolis. The train sometimes served as a “word-of-mouth” version of the classified ads. Many passengers saw fit to get off the train in Indianapolis, rather than to keep traveling because they heard there were jobs to be found.

Gladys Cohen Nisenbaum’s father, Isaac Cohen, was originally hired to work in the coal mines in West Virginia after he arrived in New York from Monastir. The work was arduous, dangerous and ill-paid, so he escaped under cover of night and headed west. He got off the train before they got to Chicago because someone on the train had heard there were jobs in Indianapolis. Isaac Cohen was one of the earliest Sephardic immigrants to Indianapolis and became one of the founders of Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation. After securing work at Kahn’s Tailoring, a large German-owned firm that hired many Sephardic immigrants, he sent for his wife and two oldest daughters, who were still back in Monastir, to join him.



A group of young Sephardic men, some of them young immigrants, themselves, (among them Mallah Mordoh), celebrate their American citizenship.



Two of the three surviving sons of Mallah Mordoh, Al and Solly Mordoh, at the Etz Chaim 4th of July picnic, 2010.

Many short accounts of the Sephardic migration to Indianapolis are contained in a booklet called, “Sepharad ’92,” written in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the expulsion from Spain. One of the accounts, written by Al Mordoh, describes his father Mallah’s arrival from Salonika:

“My dad, Mallah Mordoh, was born in Salonika in 1898. He came to this country when he was sixteen years old. He went to Cincinnati to be with his brother Jack, and got a job as a machinist. When he was about twenty, he was transferred to Detroit where he met my mother, Lora Cohen. Then they left Detroit so they could live in Indianapolis with their brothers and sisters” (Sepharad ’92:7).

Robert Murff points out that this pattern, of moving from city to city, following networks of family and friends in search of a better life, is certainly not unique to any family, nor was it limited to the Jewish and African-American communities. As he put it, “It is also true for the white families. Most of them were first generation migrants from the South. [They were] from Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, and so on.”

Some of the new arrivals heard there were better working opportunities in Indianapolis than elsewhere, but for others, landing in Indianapolis happened by chance. Southsider John “Mancy” Calloway told how his birth determined his family’s decision to stay in Indianapolis:

“My mother and father were headed for Columbus, Ohio, and they got to Indianapolis. I told mom [from the womb], I said, ‘I want to come out here, I don’t want to go any farther,’ so I was born here [laughs]. [My father] went on to Ohio, [and] Momma stayed here with my three brothers and one sister.”

The accumulation of these cultures on the Southside occurred gradually, and it built upon family connections and relationships from the places of origin. Anne

Calderon's father, fleeing the Turkish draft, came to the United States in 1912 when he was just 14 years old. As she told us,

"My grandfather didn't want him to go to war. Turkey was building an army and drafting all the young men. My grandfather didn't want him to be drafted, so he sent him to America so he could go to school. He heard schooling was free [in America]. He came with several friends."

As was common at the time, former friends and neighbors from the old country helped the new arrivals get settled. As Gladys (Cohen) Nisenbaum recalled,

"When Annie Calderon's father came to Indianapolis, he lived with my mother and father, which was a tradition. When anyone came from the village, my father's house was one of the places where they stayed. That was long before I was born so there was room. Eventually they started to go out and then they got married and had places of their own. Gabriel and Estreya Calderon were Annie's parents and they lived across the street from us."



Immigrant women in a citizenship class at the Communal Building take a break from their studies to pose for this picture.

African-American residents likely initially chose the Southside for its proximity to the states of the American South from which they had departed during the Great Migration. During the movement from rural to urban areas, job opportunities were significantly more

available in the newly established neighborhoods surrounding a growing downtown Indianapolis. The Murff family exemplifies such a motivation to settle in Indianapolis. Robert Murff also pointed out that, although most African Americans came to Indianapolis seeking shelter from harsh intolerance and in search of job opportunities, friends and family already living in the city

encouraged them further. The Murffs experienced the great move to the North, along with many other African-American families seeking refuge from slavery, oppression, and lack of opportunity. According to Robert Murff,

“The 30s were hard times for all Americans, but especially for the share-cropping Black man who faced not only the difficulty of scratching out a living for himself, but was confronted by the new slave master’s plantation owners. So as a result, he chose to move north to provide another opportunity for his family. [...] My dad was headed to Chicago, had six kids and a wife that was pregnant, on his way to Chicago. My uncle, Dr. Murff, convinced him that he would have a better chance if he settled here, rather than go to Chicago. So my dad said, ‘Okay, I will give it a chance.’”

Many members of the community did not come straight to Indianapolis, but rather, first went to other industrial cities like Chicago or cities closer to the South like Cincinnati. Some settled in Indianapolis while they were on their way to somewhere else. John “Mancy” Calloway described how some people were seeking neighborhoods in which they might find family or friends, but that sometimes people just happened upon the Southside:

“They got off the train there and of course they asked the porters, ‘Where are the colored people at here in this town?’ The porter directed him to the west side, east side, southeast—never said a word about coming down the street behind Union Station. We wondered ever since why they didn’t. Most of the porters didn’t know we existed. They didn’t know anything about the Southside, but a few of us somehow or another came up from different places and stopped on the Southside.”

Overcoming Resettlement Difficulties Together

While African Americans, like their Jewish neighbors, fled discrimination, their presence was not readily accepted by the whole of Indianapolis. The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) dominated white civic organizations and, based on notions of white supremacy, fought for racial purity and committed violence against anyone who tried to mingle the races or attend the establishments that they frequented (Thornbrough 7-13, 259). Discrimination prompted the two communities to form organizations and alliances to overcome these difficulties.

When African Americans arrived in the North, there were already many networks of African-American churches, and Black neighborhoods in Indianapolis (Brady 1996:1, cited by Mullins 2006). The North was different from the South in that it lacked the same kind of overt racism found further south (Mullins 2006: 65). Although African Americans were in Indianapolis for a while before the Jim Crow laws were enforced, a more subtle racial discrimination existed in the city. However, African Americans were resilient; they were intellectually certain of who they were in spite of the discrimination they experienced in realms like housing, social and public associations, schools, and politics (Thornbrough 5). The KKK's violence only made Blacks fight harder against the state legislation mandating segregated housing.

As people who migrated into Indianapolis were getting adjusted and continuing to preserve their culture in the new land, the Jewish Communal Building on the Southside catered primarily to the Jewish community. Mayer Chapel, initially attended mostly by the Irish community who lived along South West Street, also extended their services to these disenfranchised communities, particularly African Americans (Lovenbruck 48). Mayer Chapel was a Presbyterian Church named for Ferdinand L. Mayer, who provided most of the funding for purchasing the lot and erecting the chapel (Hale 1994). The chapel was utilized primarily for church services. However, the Children's Aid Association for a Pure Milk Station was run from Mayer Chapel. Beyond its religious function, it also served as a neighborhood house, a social setting where mothers met, and the regular meeting place of boys' and girls' clubs.

The grassroots initiatives and industry of southside residents allowed for an inclusive neighborhood cohesion that fostered youth programs, cultural preservation, and development. Southside resident William Craig's father, William Lester Craig, headed up the South Side Civic Club by negotiating with the Parks Department to buy a house on West Ray Street to use for Black recreational and social activities. However, this venture did not meet its full potential due to shortcomings in the upkeep of the building. Miz Pete shared her fond memories of gathering around the pot-bellied stove that stood in the middle of the Ray Street house. The cooperation among various community organizations served to provide a place of refuge and support, resulting in the transformation of the Jewish Communal Building to a more multi-ethnic service center. The Communal Building allowed African-American youths from the Ray Street Center to transfer their activities there after Ray Street closed, and Mayer Chapel also agreed to take on some of the Ray Street Center's programs.

Contemporary Demographics of the Southside

There were always Jews living on the Northside, as well as on the Southside, particularly around the neighborhood known today as Mapleton-Fall Creek. The northside Jews were generally more affluent and in the post-World War II period, the southside Jews began to migrate north. As the Jewish population departed, more African Americans moved into the newly vacated homes. Southside resident Alvin Mordoh, whose family lived on the Southside for 36 years, recalled the demography of the neighborhood prior to 1956: “The Sephardim and the Ashkenazim were, say, 90% of the area at that time because, as families brought families over, they would bring them into the neighborhood, and that is how the neighborhood grew.” Some residents say that the reason Jews began moving north was due to a lack of business at the time and a search for better educational opportunities. Alvin Mordoh remembered that the Jewish community left because all of the businesses had moved. He said,

“It was in the 1950’s when we [Jews] started getting out of there. And we became affluent and, consequently, we could afford to leave. The schools were better up north, [and] the JCC [Jewish Community Center] was on Hoover Road. I wanted to be there so that my kids could do the same things that I had.”

Black residents didn’t move out of the neighborhood in great numbers until the construction of I-70, when eminent domain seizures banished them from their homes. With the construction of the interstate in the 1970s, it became evident that the city had other plans for the Southside. As Betty Taylor said,

“When they brought the highway through, a lot of the colored people down there, they left. You can see the highway took all the homes on the side that I lived at. They didn’t bother anything on the other side of the highway.”

William Craig agrees that I-70 was a push factor in moving out the African-American residents. Even after relocating his family funeral home once because of the highway, they had to move again:

“We had to move up there in 1965 when the highway came through. They said they weren’t going to disturb us. Then in 1974 Dad was in the hospital when we got notice that we had to move again. We moved up to the northside in 1974.”



Becky Profeta and Cleo Moore in front of the house each of them had once lived in, located on the 1100 block of S. Illinois St.

Still, some residents continue to live on the Southside, evidence of the community's tenacity. Because different ethnicities built the Southside into a tightly woven community based on shared experiences, its former residents generally remember it as a place that refused to fall victim to the racial tensions that plagued the rest of the city, state, nation, and world at the time. Lee Cohen recalled a story about how a gang of young men from the Westside threatened to come to the neighborhood to beat up the Jewish boys. When they arrived, they were met by a united front of Jewish boys and their African American friends.

The gangs slunk off, not willing to challenge such a formidable opposition.

The predominant ethnic composition of the Southside today is African American, but many Appalachians and Latinos reside in the area as well, particularly south of the historic boundary of Morris St. Anne Calderon's house still belongs to the African-American family they sold it to when they moved north. On a bus tour of the neighborhood, we discovered that both Cleo Moore's family and Becky Profeta's had lived in the same house on the 1100 block of S. Illinois at different times. The current residents of the neighborhood continue to face the struggles that accompany the growing pains of Indianapolis, but they don't back down.

Miz Pete sums up the feeling of a community that was built on humanity, shared identity, and unity:

"I don't know how people think of other places but the thing that we had was an influx of everybody in our community. Not just Black and Jewish people—that was never a thing. We had a community. We didn't look at color. We never did that. We weren't brought up to think of ourselves by those means. We didn't meet strangers. We met people."

"The Isom Johnson Family" **By Brenda Marie Johnson**



A portrait of Brenda Marie Johnson's parents, Hattie and Isom Johnson who, like many other African-American southsiders, came to Indianapolis from the south, seeking a better life for their families.

He arrived in Indianapolis with my mother and two eldest brothers in the 1940s, vowing never again to return to that red clay dirt near Scott County, Forest, Mississippi, where my mother grew up. He grew up a short way from there, but it was no better in either place, he said. His anger flared when we'd try to talk to him about it, so we knew not to push him on the subject. He never said what really ran him away from there, and he never wanted to talk about it. His name was Isom Johnson, and he was born in 1916.

Of course, there were a couple of times he had to break his vow—like the passing of his father or

coming to get us kids from down there because one of us had gotten sick or something. But that was it. He was done with it, and after living a couple of places here in the city, he purchased a house on the Southside of Indianapolis in the neighborhood that at that time people used to call "Ole Jew Town."

"Ole Jew Town," or Prospect Heights (according to the abstract dad got on the house), was part of the original "donation lands to establish the 'town' of Indianapolis." The document went back to the 1800s. If I'm not mistaken, Indiana became a state in 1816. I still have hinges on some of the old doors in the house that are stamped "July 20, 1820." But that didn't matter to him—he had a house in what he thought was a pretty decent neighborhood. He didn't own a car, so he had to walk everywhere—to work, to the grocer, to the department store, to the meat market, to the bakery, to the drug store. And everything was located in walking distance, right on Meridian Street.

He settled my mom and brothers into what looked like was going to be a pretty good life. Needless to say, he was proud of himself. He came here with nothing, and he was making a way for himself and his family.

His pride in himself didn't just stem from home ownership. He achieved it from the obstacles he had to overcome to obtain what he had. He'd gotten a good job at the U.S. Rubber Company, which later became Uniroyal, with very little education. You see, his mother, Eliza, died when he was but 12 years old, and school became an unimportant issue to his family. His older brother, Edgar, left home at 14, so dad was sent into the fields to work on his father's farm. I think he said he only went to the 3rd or maybe 6th grade. Once his father remarried another woman with children, an Indian we called "Grandma Jenny," who

insisted her children would go to school. My grandfather, Phil, thought dad could return to school, too. But in the class his pride took over because the other students of his age had passed on to higher grades, so he felt awkward being in a class with the younger kids. So, he dropped out himself.

Coming to Indianapolis was like a dream come true for him. Our family grew and grew, and my parents ended up with five boys and two girls.

Now I'm not going to sit here and tell you that my father, Ison, was some kind of Boy Scout; nor was he a church-going deacon sort of man. I looked his name up one time in a Book of Names, and I found that his name "Isom" came from the cowboy era. He was hardcore like that. We, his children, called him "The Rock," and I don't know if he ever picked up on that or just chose to ignore our satire.

Be that as it may, he was no stranger to the streets of Indianapolis. He was a quiet storm—didn't start no trouble, but didn't back down when confronted. He met a lot of people who felt a need to challenge that Mississippi spirit of "who he thought he was." I grew tired early in my life of gossiping people who always wanted to tell me something about what they heard about my father. He died in 1988 of bone cancer. All I know for certain is that he worked tirelessly for our family—34 years at the Rubber Company—and allowed all of his children the education he didn't think was available to him.

My eldest brother, Chester (deceased from complications of Agent Orange), was a retired military man of the Vietnam War and a retired postal worker. My second brother, Idriss, has a Master's degree in Nuclear Medicine and just retired as a physicist in Oklahoma City. My sister Mary just retired from Computer Operations at the City County Building. My brother Rudy died at a factory here in town in 1985 at 36. Myself, I've retired, too, from the Indiana Department of Education in fiscal management. My younger brother, Jimmy, is a professional barber, hair dresser/stylist, in Atlanta, Georgia. My youngest brother, Ted, worked for the prosecutors' offices in Chicago and Atlanta, and now has his own law firm, Johnson & Associates. He is a trial criminal defense attorney in Atlanta and has written his memoirs—*Faces I Have Seen*—about the murder cases he's handled.

Hattie, our mother, was born in 1921 and had a lot to do with our education as well. Note that while she left Mississippi with no regrets, her family (the Beamons) had a high regard for education. With a total of 12 siblings in their house, four of the younger graduated from universities, two with M.A.'s in History and another with a Master's in Consumer Economics. One of her brothers even got drafted by the San Francisco 49ers, though his football days were shortened by WWII and an injury.

Mom was one of the older children, and she worked in the fields, too. Early Beamon, my grandfather, was born before the Emancipation in the 1800s. Somehow, he was able to obtain land, and mom's family still owns close to 300 acres in Forest, Mississippi. (How about *that* for reparations and those 40 acres and a mule!) His land acquisition may have started from his slave mother, Alice Floyd. I just don't know for sure.

Mom worked at times here in Indianapolis as well. She was a cook, a salad maker for the Warren Hotel, now called the Cantebury. She followed her chef out to the Hyatt Hotel at the airport, and after many years there, she finally went on disability because her legs could no longer tolerate the standing.

In contrast to my father, mom was the dedicated Christian soldier. She was a praying, gospel-singing woman with a soft heart and gentle spirit. She was our peacemaker. She died in 1995 after a long battle with Alzheimer's.

Giving thanks and honor to my Lord in all things, especially for allowing me this opportunity to give homage for their love and affection.

CHAPTER 2

“Their Saturdays Were Our Sundays”

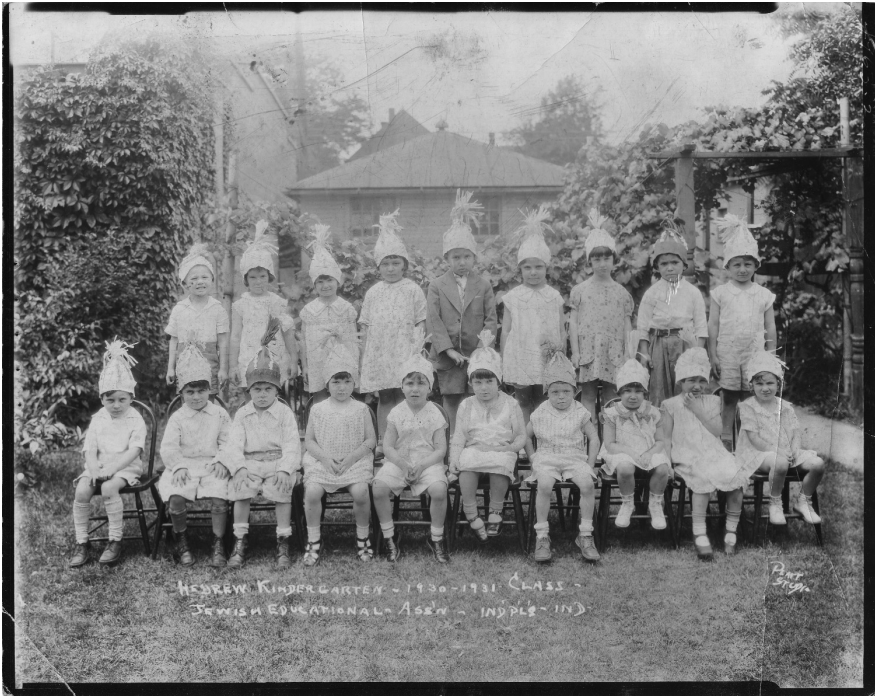
Religious Institutions and Observances

By Heidi Sebastian and Adam Vogel

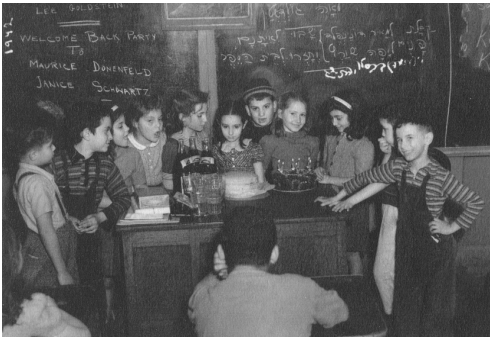
Introduction

This chapter highlights the history and influence of the religious institutions on the Southside. The synagogues played a vital role in helping new immigrants adjust to their new lives in Indianapolis. The Ashkenzic Jewish immigrants came from Europe, mainly from Germany, Poland, Russia, and Hungary. The Sephardic Jewish immigrants came from parts of the Ottoman Empire, mostly southern Europe. Most people settled close to their *shul* (the Yiddish word for synagogue), and these institutions played important roles in the community. At one time, five *shuls* populated the Southside, but as the Jews began to move north many of these *shuls* merged to form larger congregations and relocated to the Northside along with their congregants.

Churches played just as significant a role for the Christians living in the neighborhood. Baptists are the predominant Christian group on the Southside. South Calvary Missionary Baptist Church and Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church are the two Baptist churches on the near Southside. These two churches are still located in the old neighborhood despite the fact that the construction of Interstate 70 displaced many of their members. The members of each of these churches are very loyal and continue to commute back to the old neighborhood to attend Sunday services. Due to segregation and the discriminatory policies of an earlier era, these institutions often served as the only place where the African-



The 1930-31 Hebrew Kindergarten class at the Jewish Educational Association, the forerunner of the Bureau of Jewish Education (BJE).



Lea Goldstein Francovitz and her classmates at Hebrew school prepare to enjoy her birthday cake.

American congregants could gain access to essential services.

Saturdays and Sundays were important days for religious observance for families on the Southside. Each community respected the other's customs and practices. As Robert Murff told us,

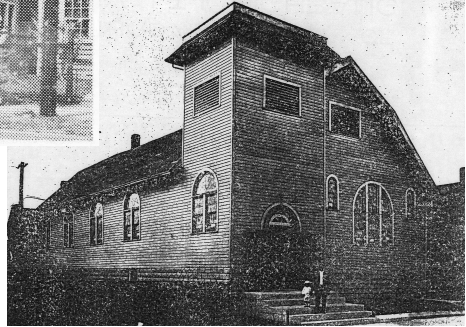
"There has always been a very close symbiotic rela-

tionship between the Jews and the African Americans, ... that connection was always there and that is why we didn't have the kind of negativity and the kind of ambivalence that pitted one racial group against another. It was a culture based on religious background, so Sundays were special days for us and Saturdays for them. We went to church on Sundays and they went to synagogue on Saturdays."



The original Bethesda Baptist Church, located on Ray St. where it stands today

South Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, located on Kenwood St.



Don Stillerman presents a Flag Day speech at the Union Street Synagogue in 1941. Boy Scouts hold up the flag.

For Jews, the Sabbath is usually observed as a day for worship and rest, however some of the families were so stretched for resources that they were unable to take time off from work to attend Sabbath services at the synagogues. As Al Mordoh told us, “I don’t recall going to the synagogue on Saturday because my father worked on Saturday.”

For the African Americans, Saturdays were days when they prepared for their own worship on Sunday. John “Mancy” Calloway shared this reminiscence:

“Well we had to do so many different things on Saturday. We had to scramble. Buying clothes to wear on Sunday to church. We went to the Salvation Army, places like that. And we had ways of getting a few pennies. You could always scrounge. We sold glass, we sold tin cans, we sold scrap iron. Anything we could get a hold of for junkyards to buy. And then on Saturdays we prepared for Sunday. Their Saturday was our Sunday.”



South Calvary Missionary Baptist Church congregation

Being Jewish in a New Land

“There are over 5,600 graves in the 11 Kelly Street cemeteries, where the city’s been burying its dead for 150 years” (“Jewish Cemetery Project Preserves Tradition,” *Indianapolis Star*, Jul 26, 2009). On Tuesday, April 6, 2010, our class visited the Jewish Cemetery at 20 W. Kelly St. with Mrs. Gladys Nisenbaum as our tour guide. One of the stories she told us was how, when Jews first settle in a new neighborhood, they immediately look for land where they can establish a Jewish cemetery. When Jewish people want to know whether there are other Jews settled in an area, they look for the Jewish Cemetery so they will know where the Jews are in the area. That is why this trip to the cemetery was so important to our research. Not only was it a land filled with stories of those who came and settled on the Southside of Indianapolis and started businesses and synagogues; the residents also had a deep relationship with the religious communities in the area and with their cemeteries.

In 1856 the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation purchased a burial ground on Kelly Street next to the Catholic and Lutheran cemeteries, and this project was completed prior to the formation of their synagogue. It is a similar story with the

Sephardic Jews, who purchased land on Kelly Street for their cemetery in 1916 and used the Communal Building for their religious services (before Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation was established). The interesting thing about the Jewish Cemetery is that, while not every synagogue sat side by side, their members lay side by side in their final resting place.

Many of the synagogues were too small to support their own burial society, so “a group of Jews came together and created a community burial society, Linat ha’zedek.” The Hungarian synagogue and Sharah Tefilla did not agree with Linat ha’zedek and created their own burial society. The Sephardim were the first to create a Hevre Kadishes (burial society) in 1921. They had a men’s and a women’s burial society, the Rochetzim and the Rochetzot (Marion County History, 11). Despite sectarian differences, the Ashkensim became incorporated with them because they needed the Jewish mortuary. Another interesting fact about the Sephardim is that they needed more burial space than they had originally purchased.

Unlike bodies of non-Jews, a Jew needs to be buried within 24 hours of their death. The body is to be washed thoroughly, clothed in a simple white shroud, and placed in a simple pine coffin. The body needs to be attended to from the time of death until the time of burial. Thus, the need for a Jewish burial society emerged.

In an oral history about Etz Chaim, Jack Cohen explained:

“The burial society was called the ‘Rochetzim.’ They were the ones that washed the dead. My dad helped establish that, but wasn’t part of it, because being a Cohen he couldn’t participate. The “Rochetzim” was a totally separate identity. One of my closest friends was part of that group. He helped with the dead. His name is Maurice Nahmias.” (Erez-Boukai, 43)

Gladys Nisenbaum, Jack’s sister, explained to us that their last name was Cohen, and there is also a role in the synagogue for people called “Cohen.” They are considered a priestly class, who serve as Rabbi when there isn’t one present and preside over the funeral. It is considered unholy for a Cohen to come into contact with the dead.

In an oral history about Etz Chaim, Sylvia Nahmias Cohen also spoke about the importance of the “Rochetzim”:

“We celebrated the high holidays, we made the Sephardic foods, and we had our picnics, which were wonderful. The ‘Rochetzim,’ which take care of the dead also had a picnic, and anything that they made at the picnic was donated to the society. The ‘Rochetzim’ were the men, and the [‘Rochetzot’] were the women. They took care of the bodies and put the shrouds on them. Al Hazen was pretty active in the burial society. Al Profeta belongs to the ‘Rochetzim,’ the men that help wash the body. He was trying to get a few other members, but he had difficulty.” (Erez-Boukai, 51, 57)



The Southside Jewish cemetery, with the gravestone of William Levy's parents, Isaac and Grace Levy, in the foreground

Max Einsteadig told of the disappearance of the burial societies in his “Tour of the Old Southside Jewish Community.” There was a house on the east side of Meridian Street that served as a home for the Linath-Hazedek, the funeral home maintained by a group of men and women for burial of the poor. Irv Ruben came to Indianapolis and opened his funeral home and offered to take over Linath-Hazedek's duties. It was put to the test and Mr. Ruben proved himself to be trustworthy.

Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation

Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation (IHC) is the oldest synagogue in Indianapolis, and the only Reform congregation in the city. (Reform Judaism originated in Germany and is perhaps the least strictly observant of the sects). The temple's history dates back to 1856, when a group of fourteen Jewish men gathered at the home of Julius Glaser and founded the congregation (www.ihcindy.org). Two years later, in 1856, a dedication was held for the congregation's first consecrated home in "Judah's Block" (East Washington), opposite the courthouse.

In 1868, they relocated to a new site on Market Street. As the congregation began to grow, they moved again in 1899, this time to 10th Street and Delaware. When IHC left the Market Street location, the temple was sold to a smaller Hungarian congregation, Ohev Zedeck (Marion County History, 2005).

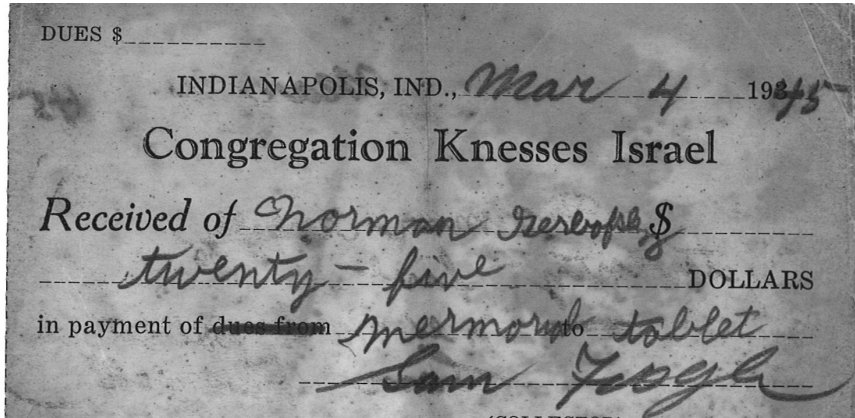
Sharah Tefilla

The second synagogue to be established on the Southside was Sharah Tefilla, founded in 1870 by a group of Polish immigrants (Marion County History, 2005). This synagogue was an Orthodox congregation; their practices differed considerably from the German reform Jews who attended IHC. During its first twelve years, it existed as a nameless religious group or "minion." Its meeting places were humble, and the gatherings small in number (Hedeen n.d.). Originally, this minion took the name Chevro Bene Jacob. When they secured a little frame building on the 700 block of South Meridian Street in 1882, they took the name Sharah Tefilla. More commonly, they were known as the old Polische Shul (David, United Orthodox Hebrew Congregation, 1984). As they continued to grow, the need for a new building arose, so in 1910 they moved to a new location at South Meridian and Merrill Streets.

Knesses Israel

Knesses Israel came to be when a group of Russian immigrants moved to the area. This Orthodox synagogue, also known as "Russische Shul," was

founded in 1893, when a building was constructed at the corner of Eddy and Merrill Streets (David, United Orthodox Hebrew Congregation, 1984). In 1923, after many years of steady growth, Knesses Israel moved again to 1021 South Meridian Street. They shared rabbis for many years with Sharah Tefilla, as the sermons were in Yiddish and the prayers in Hebrew.



Card indicating a donation to Congregation Knesses Israel in memory of Sam Fogle.

Ohev Zedeck

Hungarian immigrants founded Ohev Zedeck in 1884. Initially, they rented storefronts as places of worship. In 1899, they were able to purchase the Market Street temple from IHC. They remained in this building until they merged with Congregation Beth El in 1927. The Hungarian Jews also set up a Jewish Hungarian school and the first Hungarian Society (Marion County History, 2005).

United Hebrew Congregation

The United Hebrew Congregation was established in 1903. In 1904, a building was dedicated at the corner of Union and Madison Streets (History of Jews in Indianapolis, Houses of Worship). The UHC was founded by seven business men who were trying to remove some of the attachment to the “old country” and start a synagogue not solely associated with Russian, Polish, or Hungarian immigrants. Also known as the “Union *shul*,” it became the largest

and most prominent of the orthodox synagogues on the Southside. It had the city's first Talmud Torah (religious school), as well as the city's first Jewish women's group (Marion County History, 2005).

Ezras Achim

Ezras Achim was the last synagogue to be established by Eastern Europeans in Indianapolis. Founded in 1910, it served some of the city's poorest Jews, thus causing it to be known as the "peddler's *shul*" (Marion County History, 2005). The temple was located at 708 South Meridian Street in a barn-like, unpainted building (The Near Southside, 1974).

Beth El

Former leaders of Sharah Tefilla split and established a new congregation in 1915, known as Congregation Beth El. In 1928, Beth El merged with Ohev Zedeck to form Beth El-Zedeck. They then moved to 34th and Ruckle Streets.

The Sephardic Congregation of Monastir (Etz Chaim)

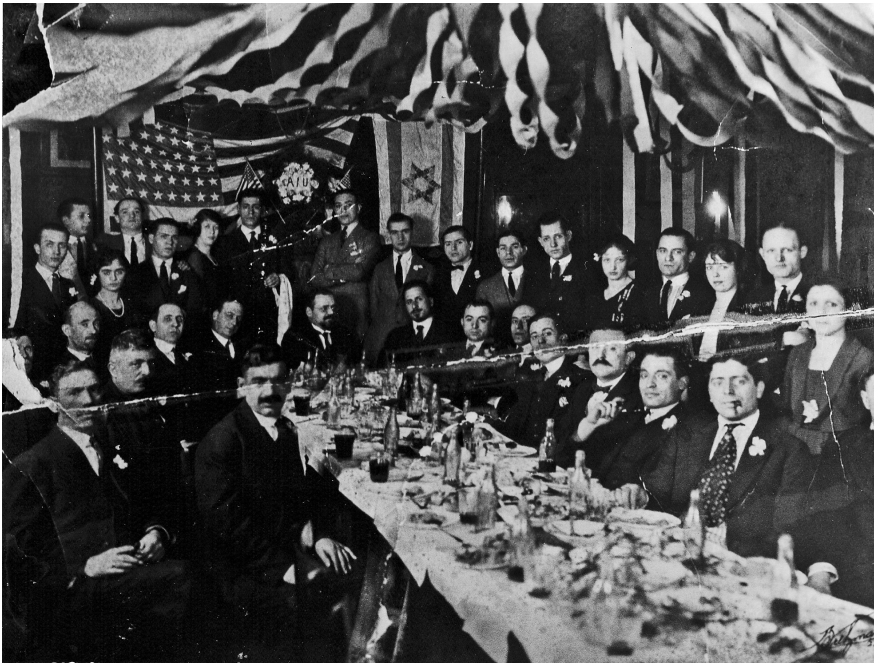


Etz Chaim—A photo of the original Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation building, once located at Church and Morris Streets on the Southside, from the *Jewish Post & Opinion* newspaper.

The first and only Sephardic synagogue in Indianapolis, in fact the only Sephardic congregation in the state of Indiana, is Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation. Founded by immigrants from Monastir. At the time when many of these immigrants arrived, Monastir was under the authority of the Ottoman Empire. When they first settled in Indianapolis, the Jewish population was comprised of Jews

from Eastern Europe. Eastern European Jews are known as Ashkenazim and speak Yiddish as their vernacular language. Many of the Ashkenazic Jews at that time did not consider the new Sephardic immigrants to be authentically Jewish, mainly because their vernacular language was a form of Spanish, Ladino, rather than Yiddish, and their religious practices and food were distinctive. By 1913, Sephardic worshippers had begun to meet on Shabbat and holidays, calling themselves the Congregation Sepharad of Monastir and holding services in the Jewish Federation's Communal Building on West Morris Street (Speer 2005).

By 1916, the congregation was no longer solely composed of people from Monastir, and the name was changed to Etz Chaim—Hebrew for “Tree of Life” (Speer 2005). In 1919, with the help of IHC, a building at the corner of Morris and Church Streets was purchased to house the congregation. The building may have originally housed a German congregation, as the writing on the cornerstone was in German. (The building is long gone, having been destroyed in a fire after the Sephardic congregation had moved out in the 1960s). During the weekdays, the congregation also used the synagogue as a clubhouse (Louvenbruck 1974).



The original founders of Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation.

In a collection of oral histories about Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation (Erez-Boukai 2005), Sylvia Nahmias Cohen recalls the early days before the synagogue was established:

“Since they had no Kahal [the Ladino word for synagogue] they used the Communal Building for religious services and other important functions such as weddings, bar-mitzvahs, etc. The first wedding in the Sephardic Community was that of Shlomo M. Nahmias to Clara Sham in 1913 in the downstairs game room of the Communal Building...The first marriage in the Kahal on Church Street was that of Solomo and Rayna Camhi in 1920.”



Moving the Torah, the holy scroll, from the original Etz Chaim synagogue at Church and Morris north to its second home at 64th and Hoover in 1964.

By the mid 1950's the ever-growing prosperity of the Sephardic community led many of the members to leave the Southside for the cleaner and greener north side of town. In 1963, in an effort to stay closer to the center of its congregants' lives, Etz Chaim moved again, this time to a 100-year-old Lutheran church at Hoover Road and 64th street.

Etz Chaim moved once again, as the congregation outgrew their home at Hoover and 64th. They began looking for a new place to move their synagogue. When members Jack and Sylvia Cohen were asked about the tract of land on which their house was built, they made that land available to Etz Chaim for purchase so they could build a new synagogue at 69th and Hoover where it stands today. The building was dedicated in 2005, and it exists as one of the most beautiful synagogues in the city. Al Mordoh shared the history of Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation with us:

“I went to the [original Etz Chaim] at Church and Morris St., which was a Sephardic synagogue. They bought it from the Lutheran Church. Strangely enough, I lived on Rainbow Lane [on the north



The second location of Etz Chaim at 64th and Hoover. It is now a Pilates studio.



The current Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation, which was dedicated in 2005 and is located at 69th and Hoover Rd.



South Calvary Missionary Baptist Church stands today at the corner of Kenwood Street (once known as Maple Street), and an area where African Americans were concentrated in the old neighborhood.

side] when I saw this church being sold at 64th and Hoover Road, and I prevailed upon the synagogue and the congregation to buy it. We bought it in 1964; it was a Lutheran church, and the church we had on Morris St. was also originally a Lutheran church. Then we were there for I don't know how many years, a long time, and in 2005, we built this new synagogue over here on Hoover Road."

South Calvary Missionary Baptist Church

South Calvary was born out of a dispute among worshippers at Mt. Zion Baptist Church. In 1875 some of the Christian brethren sought to repair a local levee in an attempt to prevent a loss of life and property. Their fellow church members did not believe in interfering with the work of God, even when the loss of human life could be prevented, so they excluded the dissenting congregants from membership in the church (Louwenbrouck 1974). Those members who were forced out of Mt. Zion formed



Men at ceremony at South Calvary Baptist Church in the 1950s. Written on back: Roy Sears, John Washington, Perry, Rev. L.A. Manuel, Armstead Johnson, Arthur Dabney, Gene Rouse, Felix Moore, Hezakiah Styles.

South Calvary, which began in the blacksmith shop of the new Reverend Thomas Smith (Reed, 1998). Reverend Charles F. Williams sponsored the creation of the first church building at the corner of West Morris and Meikel Streets in 1882. He bought the property in his own name and deeded it to the church. He served South Calvary as pastor for thirty years. Three years before his death in 1912, he was reimbursed by the church (Louvenbruck 1974).

Rev. G.L. Lillard became the pastor in 1913, and his interest in young people led him to encourage youth groups like the Baptist Young People's Union. His vision of a larger church led to the construction of a new building, but only the basement had been completed when he left the church in 1922. The Rev. J.T. Highbaugh completed the new building in 1929, located at the corner of Morris and Kenwood Streets, where it remains today (Louwenbrouck 1974). As one Southsider told us,

"I went to South Calvary because my mother went to South Calvary, my aunt went to South Calvary, her children went to South Calvary, and so on. Everybody went to either Bethesda or South Calvary; those were the two churches where the majority of the Black people on the Southside went to church."

Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church

In 1922, Reverend G.L. Lillard left South Calvary to start his own church, which came to be known as Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church. When Bethesda first began it had a membership of approximately ten members. The members first worshipped in the home of Lottie Brown at 934 South Illinois Street. Shortly thereafter the church was organized, and plans



Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church today, located on Ray St. right next to I-70.

were hatched to come into a storefront building located at 234 West Ray Street (Bethesda, Dedication: 1970). In 1927, the church was remodeled. Throughout the renovation, the congregation worshipped in a tent on Kenwood Avenue, which was known at the time as Maple Street. Despite the construction and dislocation that Interstate 70 brought to

the neighborhood, the congregation decided to stay at their current location, even though the Interstate basically blocked in and enfolded the building. As Kim Mayfield recounted,

“Those people on Illinois went to South Calvary and the Concord Center, people in my area went to Bethesda and Mayer chapel. We were still connected. My grandmother came out of Bethesda, my great grandmother came out of Bethesda, my great uncle became a minister at Bethesda. Once again, it was another chain to the link that was a common bond for all of us. My best friends, the founders of the church were people right there on the Southside. It’s just a tradition. There’s a sense of pride, knowing that you came from somewhere. Money can’t buy you love but love can buy you a whole lot of joy (like the song), and we had that. Beautiful times, I wouldn’t trade it for anything. It was really beautiful.”

Baptist Youth And Community Involvement

Each Baptist Church in the Southside area had a Sunday school program, choirs for all ages, missionary societies, and other religious-oriented clubs for their members. Bethesda even had a group that would visit the home-ridden members. Both South Calvary and Bethesda would come together for special services, picnics, and various events, as if they were still one family living in different areas of the Southside.



A group of children gather together for a picture after Sunday School at South Calvary Baptist Church.



South Calvary Baptist Church religious training school, Mrs. Glenda Barnes, teacher, Reverend L.A. Manuel on right.

Conclusion

One of the stories we heard which seemed to us to be emblematic of the ways in which the Jewish and African-American communities cooperated with one another was told to us by Annie Calderon. South Calvary Church was built right behind the house she and her family occupied. Her mother, mindful of the Biblical injunction forbidding work on the Jewish Sabbath, was in the habit

of doing her laundry and hanging it out in the yard to dry on Sunday mornings. As Annie tells the story, one Sunday afternoon, there was a knock on the door.



Annie Calderon, standing across the street from the church, near where she grew up, shares her memory of South Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in its earliest years.

“My mother opened the door and was surprised to see a very well-dressed Black man and woman, standing on the stoop. The man wore a three-piece suit and the woman had on a hat and white gloves. It was the pastor of the new church and his wife! They asked my mother if she would consider not doing her laundry on Sundays because the people in the church could see it through the

windows. Despite the inconvenience this caused her, my mother respected that request and for the rest of her days on the Southside, she never hung the laundry out on a Sunday again.”

Another interesting story we heard came from Cleo Moore, and had to do with the mysterious items that many African Americans found on their doorposts when they moved into homes that had been previously owned by Jewish families. As he recalled, “We found these little metal boxes on the entryways of the houses and not knowing what they were, we pried them off.”



A typical mezuzah.

What the Moore family, like others, had actually found is called a mezuzah. Mezuzahs hang in the doorways of Jewish homes. They are essentially decorative cases holding a piece of parchment on which is written the holiest of Jewish prayers, the Shema. As it is written in Deuteronomy, the words of this prayer should be “inscribed upon the doorposts of your house.” When a Jewish family moves into a new home, they hold a special ceremony for the hanging of the mezuzah. Normally, the family would take the mezuzah with them when they moved to a new location. We could only speculate that either in the rush

of moving, or because the mezuzahs were difficult to remove after many years on the doorpost, some mezuzahs were left behind to be discovered by the new occupants.

As a community largely comprised of social minorities and immigrants, the old Southside of Indianapolis managed to thrive due to a strong sense of community cohesion. The various religious institutions and community centers played a significant role to this end. The economic, health-oriented, social, and practical services offered by these institutions went a long way in assimilating Southside residents while simultaneously preserving their time-honored traditions and cultures.



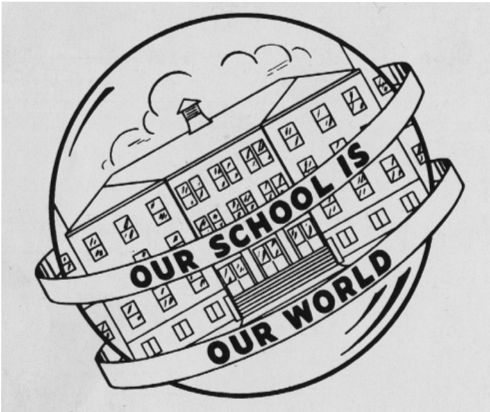
Southsiders reunite to worship together at a special Easter/Passover service at South Calvary Baptist Church in March 2012.

CHAPTER 3

“They Really Prepared the Kids to Go Out in the World”

Neighborhood Schools

By Margaret Baurley with research contributed by Erin Busk
and Drew Alvin Smith



Logo of James E. Wood High School.

Introduction

The Southside of Indianapolis had several schools, and generations of children were taught in these institutions. In addition to educational activities like reading, writing, and arithmetic, many southside teenagers had access to innovative training

programs at Manuel and Harry E. Wood High Schools. However, while some teens were learning valuable skills and trades, students at Crispus Attucks High School on the near Westside had to cope with the real and menacing effects of segregation, as the construction of this high school for African-Americans had been mandated by city leaders in 1929, when the KKK dominated Indianapolis politics. Although the primary schools on the Southside—schools 6, 12 and 22—remained integrated, in 1929, Crispus Attucks High School was opened, and all African-American high schoolers were compelled to attend that school. Crispus Attucks was widely recognized as an outstanding institution, however it was wrenching for many of the African-American Southsiders to have to leave the



The end-of-year class photo for the students of School 12 in 1949.

familiarity of their home neighborhood to travel to this new school. In 1949, when school desegregation was locally decreed, many African-American southsiders (and others) made their way back to Manual High School, which later became James E. Wood

High School, as these were the only institutions that offered vocational training. Both Manual and Wood High Schools were also integrated. While these experiences varied from generation to generation, most Southside residents agree that attending integrated elementary schools played an important role in shaping their attitudes about race and bred in them a high tolerance for diversity.

This chapter will examine the experience of neighborhood students in near southside schools, the strength of the bonds that were formed between African-American and Jewish children during elementary school, the period of segregation faced by many African-American students in their high school years, and the abundance of excellent training programs available to southside high school students. While the stories of the southside schools stand out for their integrated classrooms, the lingering effects of segregation in our educational system is a cloud that con-

tinues to hang over the Indianapolis schools, even today.



The original School 22 building

Primary School Education

The educational experience on the Southside cannot be fully understood without first painting a picture of the

journey to and from school. Because the local schools were initially established within neighborhood boundaries, children would walk to school in the morning, back home for lunch, back to school for the afternoon, and home again at the end of the day. Don Stillerman, a member of the Ashkenazic (East European) community, recalls trekking to School #22 in any weather:



Recalling that old school spirit with a 1950s pennant from School 22!

“You walked to school, that was six blocks, and you came home for lunch. You left at a quarter to 12:00 and you had to be back by 1:00. So you had to come home, eat, then leave. And mother would have lunch ready for you. I

don’t remember all that she had but often it was a bowl of soup. No matter what the weather was, you walked to school and you walked home for lunch and you walked back to school. And you came home of course after school. Walked in the rain, walked in the snow and thought nothing of it. You had to go.”

Sergeant Kim Mayfield (from the African-American community) fondly recalls the travel to and from school:

“We had tons of fun walking to school. The walk from school to home, we would have a little snowball fight, even though it was against the school rules. It was cold, rainy, but it was fun just to be with your group and play the games kids play. Like I said, it’s rich like that, a lot of love.”

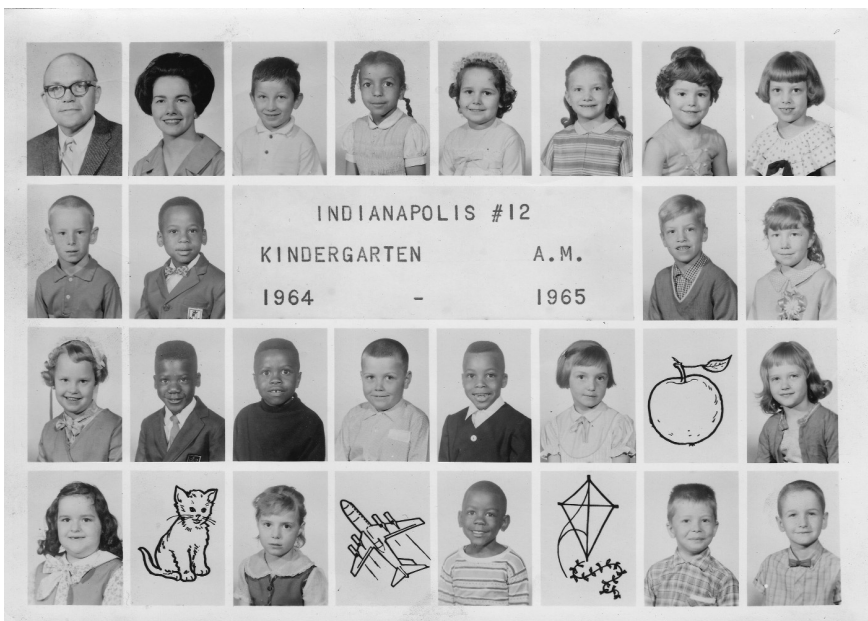
Because the Southside boasted three elementary schools, children who lived in close proximity to each other would often find themselves at different schools, as Sidney Eskenazi recalls:

“If you lived south of Wilkins Street, you went to School #22. If you lived north of Wilkins Street, you went to School #12. So, a good friend could live a half a block away from where you lived and go to a different grade school. And that’s the way it was.”

The first elementary school constructed on the Southside was Austin H. Brown School #6, originally built in 1867. School #6 stood at 702 Union



Class 8A from School 22 looks forward to the summer vacation ahead in 1935



Presenting the proud graduates of the School 12 morning kindergarten class of 1964-65.



Pupils gather for their class portrait in front of School 6 in 1933.

Street and was a four story white brick building with twelve rooms, each of which contained 50 desks. Each room was stove-heated, and custodians filled each room's coal bin daily. By 1884, a growing student population initiated the construction of an annex on the north side of the building, which created four additional rooms. Further rooms were

added in 1916, but by 1931, the population of School #6 had again outgrown the building, and the structure was razed to make way for a two-story red brick building with eight classrooms (*Indianapolis Times*, 1949).

Nine years later in 1876, Nebraska Cropsey School #22 was built at what was then known as Chestnut Street. Later, the school moved to 1231 S. Illinois Street to accommodate a growing need. As an integrated school, #22 annually put on "one pupil produced program [based on] the work of Negro children" as well as a yearly Hanukah program presented in the school auditorium (*Indianapolis Times*, 1949). Don Stillerman has fond memories of School #22 and the activities that the school offered:

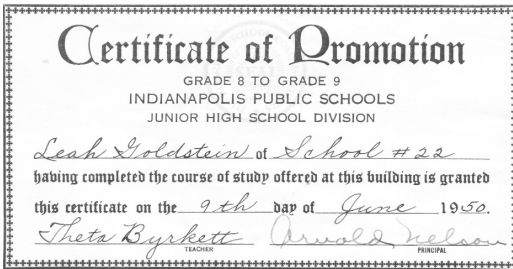
"Public School #22. Good old #22. It's no longer standing. Now School #22 actually was a big lot and had a playground on the premises. In sixth grade, seventh, and eighth, I was on the traffic force. We were out every day directing traffic, watching the kids cross the street, stopping cars. This was before and after school. You had to be in the sixth grade to get on the traffic force. I was a patrol man and in seventh grade. I was lieutenant. In eighth grade I was captain. One day when I was captain, a couple of police officers came to school to check. It was towards the end of school, I got to ride with them. That was a big deal, and they took me home. Well, can you imagine driving up in a police car? What your mother would think? I assured her nothing was wrong, I just got a ride home. That felt good not to walk home. I really scared her. She thought I was in trouble."

Many former School #22 pupils' attachment to that institution remains so deep that to this day, former Southsider Leon Mordoh treasures a brick from the original structure. As he put it,



A photo taken in January 1938 of class 8A from School 22.

“And then of course I went to School #22, which is now the Concord Center, I bought a brick from the school when it was torn down, so I own part of that, that memory is still with me.”



Congratulations are in order as Lea (Goldstein) Frankovitz gets promoted from grade 8 to grade 9 at School 22.

Lastly, Robert Dale Owens School #12 was built in 1877 at 733 S. West Street. The school's namesake, Robert Dale Owens, came from Glasgow and served in the state legislature. In this political capacity, Owens lobbied for the establishment of uniform textbooks and other improvements to the education system. As early as 1910, School #12 had organized adult education courses in millinery, cooking, nutrition, and sewing. In 1917, a new building was constructed for 7th and 8th grades, followed by the addition of open-air classes in 1918 and the school traffic squad in 1928 (*Indianapolis Times*, January 9 1949).



School 12, named for Robert Dale Owen, who emigrated from Scotland in 1825 and who is also known for founding the utopian community of New Harmony in southern Indiana.

In addition to public school, many southside Jewish children attended the

Rabbi Neustadt Hebrew School after public school. This school provided children with a Hebrew education, as Bernie Horowitz describes:

“I went to a Hebrew school, where the teaching was based on the Bible. Everything in Hebrew and translations. The translations were mainly Biblical translations word for word. It didn’t stick with you. If you went out of Hebrew school you forgot everything you learned. I went probably seven or eight years. At that point it was located on the corner of McCarty and Union Street. It was called the Rabbi Neustadt Hebrew School. We always referred to it as *cheder* [the Hebrew word for classroom]. We went 3-5 or 4-6, something like that—two hours, Monday through Thursday.”

In addition to religious lessons, Horowitz also found that shenanigans in Hebrew school could result in learning a lesson in origami:

“I decided one day I’m not gonna take my yarmulke [religious skull-cap], so maybe I’ll get kicked out. Well, they figured that one out so we were taught how to make paper hats out of sheets of dryer paper. We folded it over and made a cap, or they also would furnish yarmulkes.”



Hebrew school students and their teacher getting ready to perform a play for the holiday, Purim.



Old friends and childhood neighbors Terry Hazen Ward and Letha Johnson Beverly.

Letha Johnson Beverly and Terry Hazen Ward, who grew up together on the 1000 block of South Capitol, recalled another humorous story connected to Hebrew School. Terry's older brothers, Alan and Marty, used to cause havoc on the bus to Hebrew School, resulting in their periodic sus-

pension. "As soon as they got back to the block," Letha recounted, they would be off with their buddies, my older brothers Freddy and Billy!"

Mischief aside, back in the public schools, as children shifted from elementary school to high school, Bernie Horwitz noted that the demographics of the students shifted as well:

"We did not know the term integration until we were in high school. Everybody played with everybody else, and the word was very foreign to us. I think the Black children went strictly to Attucks for high school at that time. While we didn't know it was segregation, it was."



Pupils eager and ready to learn in Room 10 at School 22, 1953.

The Legacy of Segregation

For many years, no separate schools for African American students existed in Indianapolis. This changed in 1922, when the School Board adopted a resolution that authorized the construction of a “Colored High School.” Five years later, Crispus Attucks opened its doors, and African-American high school students were compelled to attend, regardless of their residential locations throughout the city. Though Emmerich Manual Training High School was the closest high school for the southside teen-agers, African American students began being bussed to Crispus Attucks High School on the near Westside. As John “Mancy” Calloway remembers, the change was confusing for children who had long been accustomed to the diverse school settings of the integrated elementary schools:

“You must know this... we got three schools down there. Around our part of town, we had any nationality you could think of. Around East Street you had the Italians. In our part we had everything, predominately Jews. Naturally, we didn’t live around any rich people, but we had everything, and we dealt with them all.... The reason we had to travel to Attucks is because we weren’t allowed at Manual. Strange because before I was born, Blacks could go to Manual. When the war started they cut the Blacks off. We went to Attucks. It was a nice big school.”

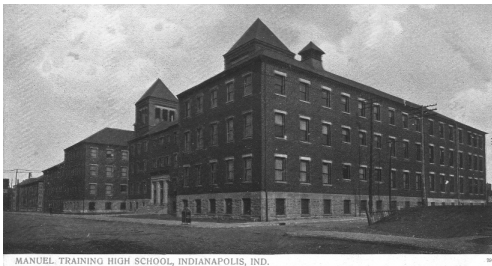
Needless to say, while this change was most devastating for many African-American students who were forced to comply, it was also a loss for their Jewish classmates and friends, as Sephardic community member Becky Profeta recalled:

“I went to school, it was not segregated, and when I graduated from the sixth grade, seventh grade, I went to Manual, and I didn’t see my friends anymore. And I told my mother. I said, ‘Their own school? Why do they need their own school? It’s right here, we could walk together to school.’ I didn’t understand it—why they went to Attucks. They would have loved going to Manual. I talked to them. They would have loved going there with all of us.”

Attucks was armed with a highly educated African-American faculty whose mission was to provide an exceptional education to the students. Attucks turned out notable alumni like jazz guitar legend Wes Montgomery,

United States Congresswoman Julia Carson, and Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson. But Mrs. Profeta was right in her assumption that many of her fellow African-American classmates would have treasured the opportunity to attend Manual. Henry Dabney, neighborhood resident and School #22 classmate, recalled:

“Manual was about 4 blocks from where I lived. That was one of the most disappointing things in my life, when I didn’t get to go to Manual. There was nothing I knew about Crispus Attucks. I tell everybody this, because this is the truth: the first day I went to Crispus Attucks, that’s the first time I can remember in my life that I had seen that many Black people collectively. The first full day at Crispus Attucks, we had to go the auditorium, and they played the Negro National Anthem, and I thought, ‘What is this?’ I didn’t even know what that was. We had never even heard about that. There were six Blacks that graduated from School #22, three girls and three boys, and I was kind of a hotshot. And that was what was so disappointing to me, when I couldn’t go to Manual with everyone else who graduated. I went from being kind of a hotshot to a place where nobody knew me. That was one of the great disappointments of my life. I got over it, but I tell you, it wasn’t easy.”



Postcard of the original Manual Training High School. The building still stands on Merrill Street.

In 1949, a new law was passed requiring phased desegregation, thus ending the legacy of division on the Southside and opening the doors of Manual, which later became Wood High School, to all southside children. New generations of African Americans were once again permitted

to take advantage of the many academic and vocational courses offered on the Southside.

Preparation for the Future

In 1895, Emmerich Manual High School was opened after the state legislature granted permission for a tax levy to build a trade high school in Indianapolis.

Manual High School Song

Onward Manual, On Forever,
 Always to success,
 Let your banner never waiver,
 Failure ne'er confess.
 Onward Manual, ever onward
 Make a glorious name.
 Strive upward,
 Strive and gain an envied fame.



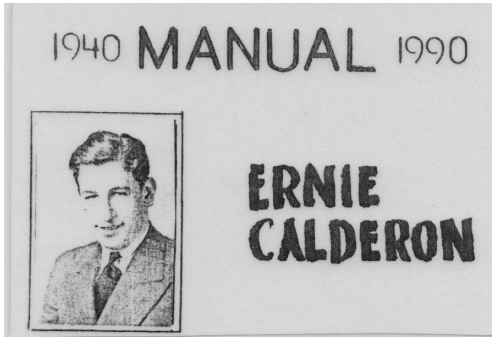
Manual served as a training high school but also as a means for empowering Indianapolis youth. Gladys Cohen Nisenbaum credits Manual with preparing her for employment after high school.

Manual High School Fight Song.

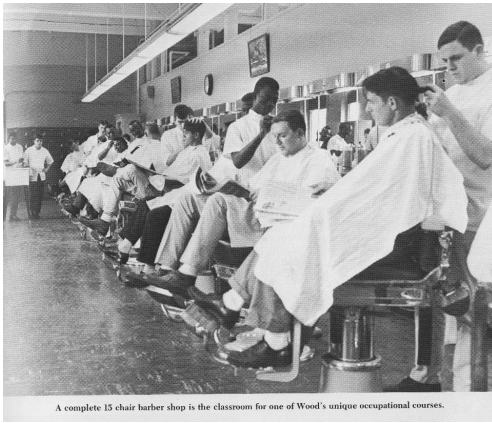
"I went to Manual training high school... and it really was training for jobs. There was a shop there where kids would make things. I took two years of French, and I was assigned to Mrs. Schull [the French teacher] as her secretary so I could take shorthand and do all her letters and things. My idea of going to college was not in the works for me because there was no money, and so I went to work. Later I saved enough money and was able to take some courses at Indiana University and so forth. That was a wonderful background to have rather than just only academic. It was like on-the-job training."



The Manual High School class of 1953 gather at their 25th reunion in 1978 to share fond memories of their school.



Ernie Calderon's nametag from his 50th reunion of Manual High School's class of 1940.



A complete 13 chair barber shop is the classroom for one of Wood's unique occupational courses.

Students learn how to be barbers at one of Wood High School's vocational courses in 1966.

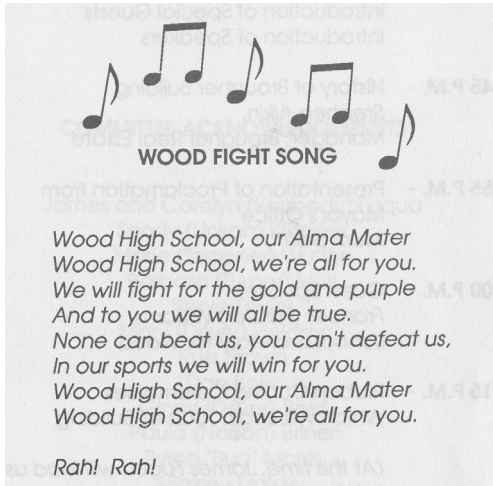


Robert Moore, who learned his trade as a barber at James E. Wood High School, cutting hair at Midway Barber.

In 1953, Manual moved to further south to a bigger, more efficient building to accommodate the school's growing needs where it stands today. Many Southsiders, among them Cleo Moore, recall the rumors swirling at the time Manual was relocated. There were claims that the building was dangerous and condemned and was going to be demolished. At the time of its relocation, the curriculum consisted of thirteen departments. When Manual moved to the new location, the original building was renovated and later that year, Wood High School made its debut. Much like Manual, Wood focused on training in vocational skills, but as neighborhood resident Robert Murff notes, Wood also featured an adapted educational program for children with learning disabilities:

"Now Wood High School, it was unique. In fact, it was the most unique school in the city. They had a separate school within the high school, a program called the adapted materials. It was for the slow learner kids and kids with learning disabilities, and they had them in a special section of the school."

Carol Beach described how the courses offered at Wood attracted students from all over central Indiana:



The fight song from James E. Wood High School.

“You got to meet a lot of students not just from your neighborhood but everywhere. The Lockfield Garden kids would come in the afternoon for vocational courses. We had students from Decatur Central, which is way out going towards Mooresville, and we had courses in dental hygiene. We would have students from the north side of Indianapolis come from all over in the afternoons taking up their training and that type of thing, but it was great to go there. No matter what

you wanted, they had it. It was one of the schools in Indianapolis where they offered everything from gifted classes to mechanical classes such as auto body, dry cleaning, TV...”

Cleo Moore, who both attended Wood High School as a student and later returned as a science teacher and wrestling coach, recalls the school very fondly:

“The reality is that a very unique merging of a group of dedicated, deeply compassionate, caring and committed educators happened to converge at the right time in the right place. With much patience, struggle, flexibility, grit and a collective belief in the good of people no matter what, this group of teachers dedicated themselves to their profession. Over the years, they created a unique curriculum made up of industrial and practical programs including Cleaning and Pressing, Wood Shop, Electrical Shop, Metal Shop, Shoe Repair, Auto Mechanics, Beauty Culture, Practical Nursing, Banking and Basic Office Training. The school leadership was focused on getting to know individual students, attempting to guide them along paths that would lead to future career channels. In retrospect, it is clear that administrators taking on such challenges made many deep personal sacrifices. All of us “Wood Chucks” who attended the school acknowledge that we were blessed as a result of this dedication.”

Wrestlers place four men in tournaments



WRESTLING TEAM: Row One. Coach Swope, Coach Brundage, B. Murff, D. Diggs, A. Barnes, M. Odom, D. Collins, D. Doss, Head Coach Cleo Moore.

Row Two. C. Vernon, B. Price, M. Shirley, R. Robbins, R. McDowell, E. Fields, T. Judkins, L. Jackson.

After having been a champion school wrestler, himself, Cleo Moore was the coach of this 1966 Wood wrestling team.



Marlene Johnson, pictured on a button, from her reunion of the class of 1971 at Harry E. Wood High School.

Harry E. Wood was also special in having skilled instructors who focused on a range of different needs. They had separate tracks for the different students, one of which, the "Adapted Material," focused specifically on the so-called slow learners.

Despite its many successes, Wood High School also closed its doors in 1978. Neighborhood residents still question why the school closed, though the official reason given was low attendance rates. As Mary Collins states:

“The whole area was changing, it was being developed into industrial. A lot of homes were being torn down and of course families were moving, being displaced. I don’t think they had the population to support that high school anymore.”

But many neighborhood residents, like Miz Pete, maintain that closing the school was a mistake:

“I was a very ticked person when they closed Wood High School. There was no reason that they closed that high school. There was nothing going on. We had every type of program that a child could want. They really prepared the kids to go out in the world. It was one of the best programs in the Midwest at that time... If they said enrollment was down, they were lying. That was a sad day. It was my son’s senior year, he was going to be a senior... You know it was one of those things—we live through it, you know we got past it, but it wasn’t a good time. And you had some kids that really suffered behind it.”



Wood athletes build good will out in the community in 1958. Does anyone remember Deborde’s Cafeteria, seen in the background?

Sergeant Kim Mayfield believes that Wood was misunderstood. Even so, he still sees Wood as a safe haven for southside students to learn virtues like acceptance and understanding in the community:

“I met a mixture of people. In the sixties, race relations were pretty bad in the country. So, you take a school like (Arsenal) Tech... by the time I got into high school, maybe even junior high it was nothing to wake up and hear that Tech had a riot. We did not have that issue at Harry E. Wood. We had the same feeling that we had in the community. We felt safe. You didn’t have to worry. We were the last school in the city to have to have security guards to walk the halls. We did not have the problems that other schools had. We were just working class people.”

Conclusion



Beverle Miller Kane, Scott Nahmias and Hildemon Harris look at old yearbooks at one of the many scan-a-thons.

Because the community fostered a tolerant and supportive environment, the children of the Southside were able to focus on their education in an elementary school setting with little distraction. While some African-American community members were denied the opportunity to continue their schooling with their southside classmates and forced to forge new relationships at

Crispus Attucks, future generations of southside students were able to take advantage of vocational courses. As Ms. Pete Miller says, such courses “really prepared the kids to go out into the world.” Serving as a solid foundation for personal relationships and future careers, southside schools were pillars of the community.

CHAPTER 4

“They Certainly Took Care of Us”

Community Centers and Recreation

By Margaret Baurley with research contributed
by Cynthia Forrester and Christina Riley

Introduction

This chapter will explore the importance of community and recreation centers on the Southside. For newly settling Jewish immigrants, community centers helped familiarize new residents with what could be an intimidating and

unfamiliar environment. Meanwhile, African- American and Christian residents visited community centers for a range of social, educational, and health services, which benefited the neighborhood at large. Jewish children flocked to Big Eagle Camp in Zionsville for summer fun, while the



Girl scout troop gathers for activities in front of the Goodman house, 1937.

entire community enjoyed Meikel Street Park, now known as Babe Denny Park, and the variety of activities it had to offer.

The Communal Building/Concord Neighborhood Center



The original Communal Building on Morris Street, which then became the Concord Neighborhood Center.

Constructed in 1875 as a Turnverein, or German gymnastic club, the building located at 17 West Morris was turned over to the Jewish Welfare Federation in 1914 and became known as the Communal Building. To serve the newly arriving Jewish immigrant population, the Communal Building began offering naturalization classes and hosting parties, lectures, and

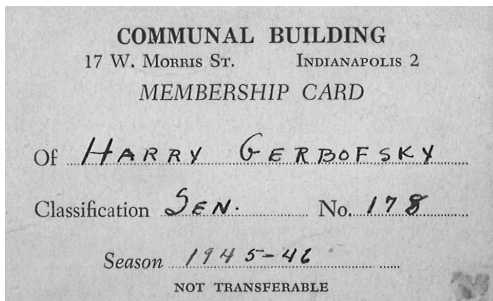
dances. The building also hosted Bar Mitzvahs and weddings. An extensive fire in 1916 prompted a remodel of the building, which was expanded to include meeting rooms, a gymnasium, a kitchen, a dining hall, rooms for a health clinic, and an outdoor playground. In 1922, a small cabin was built on the property, followed by a small house four years later. The building was abuzz with parties and dances, as well as social and sports activities. Henrietta Swartz Mervis refers to the Communal Building not only as her first love, but a place where she got to know members of the Sephardic community:

“When I worked at the community center, a lot of the Sephardics, that’s how I know a lot of them, was working at the Jewish Community Center on the South Side, at the Communal Building. And that was my first love. I loved working there... I worked with the kids; I had a Jolly Juniors Group. This group of girls, and I took them to town, which was a big deal! We lived close to town, but some of them couldn’t get to town.”

The Communal Building played numerous roles in the lives of the first generation immigrants. According to Sadelle Ray,

“We had a communal building which was a community center that was the first one that was open for us. And it was like a complex! They had a little area for the kindergarten, and in the back they had a little log cabin. That was where we had our girl scout and boy scout meetings. And then in the middle there was a softball field and the [main] building was next to that. My mother went there to get her citizenship papers.”

The later additions of the little house and cabin on the property were both utilized for youth activities. Boy Scout Troop #50 made use of the cabin on the property, as Becky Profeta recalls:



Henry Gerbofsky's membership card for the Communal Building, a Jewish settlement house that provided a range of services for new immigrants.



Children get ready to climb aboard the Concord Neighborhood Center Bus.

“Next to the Communal Building, it was the Boy Scout cabin. It was really nice. John Efroymsen, who owned Efroymsen's Department store on South Meridian, was crazy about starting a Boy Scout's camp. He found the sponsors, and everything, and they met in that little cabin. My oldest and my youngest brother were both eagle scouts. The Communal Building was a great place.”

The little house nearby was also teeming with children. Don Stillerman describes being a lucky kid attending kindergarten in the small house:

“If you went to kindergarten, you were fortunate to go. In fact on the corner of (close to) Morris and

Meridian was the Communal Building. There was a little house where kindergarten was. In fact, at recess in the winter you brought a mat and lay down to take a nap for about twenty minutes. We didn't go out to play during the wintertime, you took a nap. That was a lot of fun.”

By 1946, when Jewish migration to the Southside had slowed, the building became non-sectarian in order to serve the broader needs of a diverse community, changing its name to the Concord Center. In this period, the Center focused on youth programs, such as summer day camps and winter programs, a Mother's Club, and a well-baby clinic. Carol Beach recalls the reformed Concord Center continuing to help local families through holidays in addition to providing health services:

"Concord came in very handy. At Christmas time they would give out gifts to the children. You go and see Santa and get a free gift, sometimes that gift was about all you got. And they had the well-baby clinic—used that all the time. They had a visiting dentist that came by to do your teeth, and so we got a lot of medical services from Concord as well."

Larry Moore remembers that in addition to all of the services they offered neighborhood families, they also offered neighborhood children an opportunity to exercise and develop responsibility as counselors at the Concord Center:

"He [Jim Clark, former Concord Center executive director] wanted to do something real nice for the kids in the neighborhood, so he hired two kids to work as counselors at Concord Center. I don't know if you want to call them junior counselors or what. But I was one of the two kids he hired. And the other person was Marine Murff. So he hired us to be counselors for these kids that were 6-13. We started the first day of school in September and then worked through that whole year, till the end of school that next June. We did everything that the older counselors did. We'd have a day when we were in arts and crafts, and we had to teach them arts and crafts, we'd have a day when they were in the little house which was where you could cook, so I would make pancakes for my boys and then you were in the gym another day, and you would teach them how to play basketball and sports. Also, I turned out to be the youngest counselor, I think, in the state of Indiana."

In 1958, the main building, cabin, and small house were purchased from the Jewish Federation, with financial help from the Eli Lilly Foundation, the Indianapolis Foundation, and the Inland Container Fund. The Center was then turned over to the Concord Center Association Board of Directors.



Lunch with then Mayor Hudnut at the Concord Community Center in 1984, featuring Ms. Niki Girls (second from right), still the Executive Director today.

In the 1960's the Center added adult education to their list of efforts when neighborhood unemployment began to rise. While youth had always been a focus of the Concord Center, the 1960's proved to be a challenging period for southside teenagers. In response, the Center ramped up social and recreational programs for local teens, focusing on creating an atmosphere where everyone was welcome, which was particularly important in the turbulent racial climate of the era.



The Concord Neighborhood Center today at its current location on the 1300 block of South Meridian.

Ever growing and innovative, the center moved locations in 1983 to their current site at 1310 South Meridian Street, again changing their name to the Concord Neighborhood Center. The site where the Concord is today was once the location of School 22 and in tribute to that history, the doors of the

Concord Center are the original doors from School 22. To this day, the Center, which is often lovingly referred to as the Concord, provides many of the same important social, recreational, health, and educational services—which were so crucial to the immigration population of the Communal Building—to a new generation of Southside residents.

Mayer Chapel



The original Mayer Chapel building still stands at the corner of West and Norwood Streets, though it has not been used as a community center in some time.

In 1891, Second Presbyterian Church established Mayer Chapel to support mission work on the Southside of the city (Louvenbruck 1974). Originally located in a storeroom on South Capitol Avenue, Mayer Chapel moved to 448 West Norwood Street in 1894. Named after local businessman Ferdinand Mayer, who provided the funds for the building, the building was expanded in 1917 to include a gymnasium and renamed Mayer Chapel and Neighborhood Home. Along with the new name, this community center also decided to

separate from the Second Presbyterian Church and become a new independent church. In 1941, the Second Presbyterian Church approved of this separation.

Mayer Chapel provided kindergarten classes, mother's clubs, youth groups and Sunday school for local residents, but most cherished were the various activities and workshops for neighborhood children. Among these workshops were woodshop, cooking, sewing, gymnastics, sports, drama, and arts and crafts (Louvenbruck 1974). These workshops not only allowed many children of different backgrounds to spend time together, but also provided kids with opportunities, opportunities which may otherwise not have been available to them. As Sargent Kim Mayfield recalls:



The Mayer Chapel Community Center baseball team, starring Kim Mayfield's friends, Ricky Wright, Norman Nathan and Jesse Henry.



A young (Stan) Kim Mayfield poses in front of the Mayer Chapel bus, one of his important pillars of the community.

"We had activities. Man, we had basketball, football, downstairs rec, woodshop two days a week... Mayer Chapel was our pillar. Mayer Chapel was to us what Disneyworld is to Orlando. They took us on fishing trips; they took us on overnight camping trips out of the city. Swimming during the summertime. My older brothers and sisters, they had dances there for the teenagers. They had boxing clubs... Mayer Chapel, helped families out in the winter, or if families needed food during Christmas time. We had Christmas programs. My mother used to work there passing out baskets of food. They certainly took care of us. It was our first introduction to social services. When we were younger in the summer time, outside the Mayer chapel, they would show Disney movies. They had popcorn there for us."

One of the biggest programs for Mayer Chapel took place during the summer at day camp. During the summer, Mayer Chapel would have annual carnivals, vacation bible studies, nature groups, sports and other various activities (Louvenbruck 1974). Among these programs was something almost every child looked forward to. The camp counselors would plan special trips to various places of interest around Indiana.

During the summer of 1964, Mayer Chapel decided to expand their summer services and reach out more to the adult population. Instead of having an extra week of camp for the children, the members at Mayer Chapel decided to put extra effort getting people registered to vote. Mayer Chapel also offered adult education, parenthood clinics, and a child express health clinic.

Due to a loss of funding earlier in the decade and with an increasing number of families leaving the Southside, Mayer Chapel eventually shut down its operations in 1969. Although this neighborhood community center was forced to close, Mayer Chapel still remains a pillar of experiences in many people's memories, as Sargent Mayfield attests:

"I'm telling you, if your mother told you that you could not go to the Mayer Chapel, you didn't let your friends see it but you were hurt, you were hurting... Back then in the sixties, it was our number one pillar of our community because it gave us so much. The students from Butler University and different colleges would come there in the summer. Even in the winter they would work there. They were our group leaders. We learned so much, a great deal. I really can't imagine growing up without the Mayer Chapel. Number one, our families didn't have money to pay to go everywhere. It was just beautiful; I mean we had a ball. It was family oriented. It was a social service as well... It really built family and community."

Ray Street Recreational Center

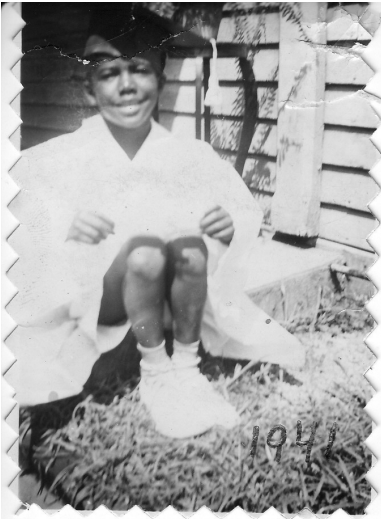
Before the Communal building was opened for non-Jewish members in the community, African-American residents didn't have a community center they could go to. This all changed when the South Side Civic Club, headed by William Lester Craig (father of William Craig, and known as "Lester" to many southsiders), organized a recreational facility they called the Ray Street Recreational Center. In 1939, at 240 West Ray Street, the facility was built. Edward Bay

“Babe” Denny directed the community center and regulated activities, as William Lester Craig’s son, William Craig recalls:

“Babe Denny... Edward Bay Denny ran the Ray Street Community Center. He also basically worked for the park department, he did the boxing. There was amateur boxing, he was the coach.”

However, after 1946 when the Communal Building opened up to non-Jewish members of the community, the Center lost its popularity and was torn down due to poor maintenance (Louvenbruck, 1974). While the center was not open for long, it was fondly remembered by its members. As Pauline Finkton recalls:

“Growing up, the Ray Street Recreation Center was basically where we were taught various games such as ping pong (I won several contests there), checkers, cards, darts and knitting and crocheting.”



Little “Billy” Craig graduates from the Ray St. Center pre-school where his mother was one of the volunteer teachers.

Miz Pete remembered that the children used to gather around a pot-bellied stove in the Ray Street Center, and Mr. Craig recalled his mother working at the preschool. For many African-American Southsiders, the Ray Street Center still stands out as a beloved institution.

Big Eagle Camp

While many neighborhood kids were playing ball at Mayer Chapel or Ray Street Rec Center or learning how to cook at the Concord, during the summers, many Jewish children were making the pilgrimage to Zionsville to attend Big Eagle Camp. Former camper Bernie Horwitz recalls that the trip from the Southside to Zionsville “felt like days,” but most campers would agree, it was well worth the journey. As Gladys Nisenbaum explains, Big Eagle provided not only fun but also nutrition to Southside kids:

“Then in summer we went to Big Eagle Camp. A family like ours paid one dollar a week for a stay at Big Eagle Camp... The whole community could go, but it was six dollars a week to go. It was a Jewish camp, but you didn’t have to be Sephardic to go. It was also a nutritional camp. One of the things we had to do was line up every morning and they gave us a big tablespoon of cod liver oil and they gave us a piece of orange to wash it down with. It was the most horrible thing to have to do, but it was supposed to be good for you.”



The “bathing beauties” of Big Eagle camp, which was run by the Jewish Federation.

Another camper, Anne Calderon remembers that Big Eagle Camp had plenty of activities for both boys and girls, as well as a special treat for those who followed the rules:

“We had swimming, crafts, volleyball. Boys and girls mixed, we used to sleep in dormitories. We all had jobs to do around the campgrounds. We had campfires; it was the biggest thing on Saturday night. We did not have a swimming pool, but we had a river...If you ate everything, they would take you into Zionsville on Saturday for ice cream, provided you cleaned your plate.”



Joe Mallah and Lawrence Siegel are ready for some tennis and volley ball, favorite sports at the camp.

Children attending the tenth annual session of Big Eagle camp for boys and girls are observing it in the customary way with volley ball, swimming, movies, games and other types of healthy outdoor activity. Mrs. Clara Silverman, camp director, is shown each Thursday night, and camp fires are conducted Sunday and Wednesday nights. Dr. H. A. Jacobs, camp physician and chairman of the camp committee, visits the cool spot on a hill overlooking the lake. The boys catch their breath in the cool air.

This photo of Joe Mallah and Lawrence Siegel is from an old newspaper article on Big Eagle Camp, which was provided to us at one of the scan-a-thons by Henrietta Schwartz Mervis. The Mallah family had never seen this photo of the young Joe before.

At the end, the camp held a field day with various activities. They had a three-legged race and other athletic activities, and campers could win prizes, which were donated by the community. Gladys Nisenbaum recalls how Brian Shapiro's grandfather, owner of Shapiro's Deli surprised the children:

"He came to the end of camp and gave us quarters, which was like ten dollars. He just wanted to do this for us."

In the 1960s, the Jewish Federation sold Big Eagle camp, and while it remains a Jewish summer camp, it no longer plays the important role it once did in helping new immigrants adjust to life in a new country.

Meikel Street Park/Babe Denny Park

In 1923, the Park Board of Indianapolis identified two acres of land near 900 South Meikel Street and established Meikel Street Park. As Sargent Kim Mayfield recalls, the park was a neighborhood mainstay for many children:

"Back then, in our eyes, it was like the Great Plains. It was a hub, it was what drew us. You could not stay home. Back then we didn't have video games or high tech electronics. It was about getting out and being with your friends outside. Especially in the summertime. It was

the magnet. If we left Mayer Chapel, our next stop was Meikel Street Park. In the summertime—beautiful memories.”

The park was not only a playground for children, but also a perfect place for picnics, sports, and various youth programs. William Craig recalls endless entertainment at Meikel Street Park:

“The park had a shelter house with water fountains and rest rooms; picnic tables; a sandbox with a very large tree in the middle of it; a sliding board; swings and a wading pool. We used to have children’s swimsuit contests! There was also a baseball diamond.”



Boy Scout Troop 63 camping out in Meikel Street Park in 1948; Mr. William Lester Craig, William Craig’s father, was the Scoutmaster.



Long-time park district employee and Southsider, Edward Bay "Babe" Denny, (third from left) at a meeting with Indianapolis Mayor John Barton in the early 1960s.

Like countless other neighborhood children, Sargent Mayfield also has special memories of excitement at the park:

"We had swings, baseball teams. We would compete against other community centers, Flanner House, and Fletcher. We had horseshoes. We wouldn't leave the park... There was nothing that could keep us out of that park except for curfew... There was nothing more exciting than when school would let out for summer break. They would take the swings down in the winter and put them back up in the summer. It was so fun coming out of school and we would know when the weather was getting warm and we would see the swings being put up. We had the sandbox. A lot of great memories and a lot of great fun. Even if there was nothing to do, you always had to go see who was in the park."

Unfortunately, like the neighborhood at large, the park went through changes in the 1970's, which led to the loss of funding for many youth programs and resulted in a lack of renovations to the park. According to a letter from the Park District, dated February 25, 1975,

"I am pleased to hear about your concern for the welfare of Meikel and Wyoming Park... Due to budget limitations, we have been forced to cut back on development and construction plans for the next few years... Because of the problems occurring in the past, we are reluctant to put many resources into the park at this time... Once again, may I say that we are pleased to hear of your concern for the park area and the potential recreation programs that could be offered at the park, and we encourage you to take an active interest in what does occur at the park."



Mr. Edward Bay "Babe" Denny, a long-time park district employee for whom Meikel Street Park was renamed in 1977.

Thanks to the persistence of many Southsiders who continued to fight for the park, it still stands today. The park is now known as Babe Denny Park. According to minutes from the Park District, in July 1977, the board approved a motion to rename Meikel Street Park after Edward Bay "Babe" Denny, an African-American long-time southside resident who was devoted to youth activities and worked for the Department of Parks and Recreation for 35 years. Once the park was re-named, the neighborhood became generally known as the "Babe Denny neighborhood."

Although the park today has no programming and is a shadow of its former self, it does have playground equipment, a shelter house, and basketball courts for neighborhood residents. But the park sees its most visitors the first Saturday in August for the annual Southside picnic where current and former residents get together for food, games, entertainment, and above all the chance to reminisce about the Southside and reunite with old friends. As Miz Pete recalls,

"You know we still have the picnic and people will say, 'Man, I wish I didn't have to leave the Southside, the best times were on the Southside.'"

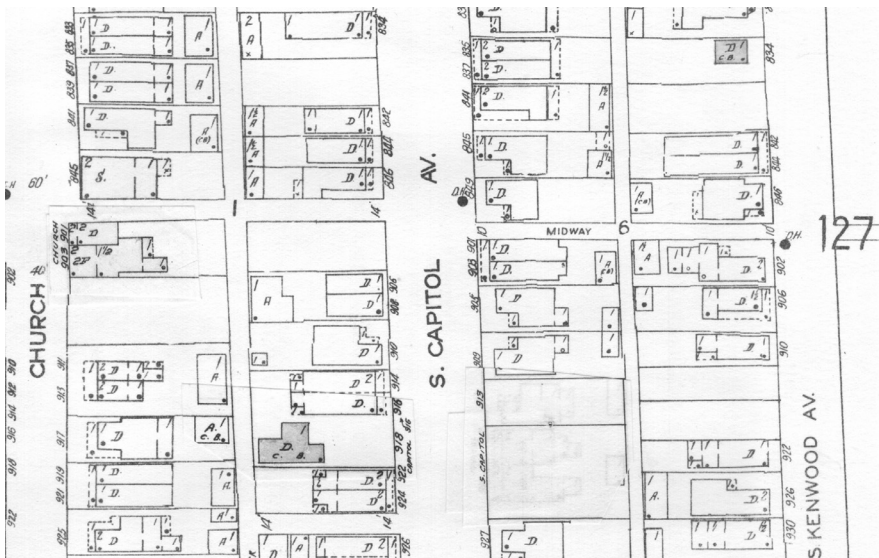
Conclusion

Community centers, camps, and parks all afforded children and adults the opportunity to relax, learn, and interact with each other within and outside of the community. For this reason, the aforementioned organizations were, to borrow Sargent Mayfield's terminology, pillars of the Southside. The tradition of community centers and social services is carried on even today by the Concord Neighborhood Center, which continues to serve the community

at large. Meanwhile, the Southside Picnic Committee serves as the glue that keeps the African-American community together with their annual picnic in Babe Denny. Because the seed of kinship and unity was sown in these neighborhood organizations and spaces from the beginning, they continue to flourish, spreading with them the long-taught lessons of youth development and empowerment, education, and friendship.

Midway Alley

Midway Alley ran between the 800 and 900 block of Capitol Avenue, between Church and Charles Streets. For many neighborhood children, it was quite a notable local landmark. As Beverle (Kane) Miller recalled, "I grew up on the 1100 block of South Capitol so we didn't go beyond Midway Alley until we went to middle school. As we got older, we would walk down Midway Alley to Mayer Chapel. A lot of romances got started there—also some fights. Midway Alley was concrete so it was easy to walk on it. Everyone used it and everyone knew where it was. It was a popular meeting place and a pathway that connected different parts of the neighborhood."



CHAPTER 5

“When the Grocer Looks Out for You”

The Southside Business Community

By Benjamin J. Linder and Kirsten Lewis with research contributed
by Evan Danner, Govind Dhaske, Patricia Jordan, Dustin Klingler
and Lindsay Schaiper



Bernie Horwitz' grandparents, Fanny and Jonah Kaseff, on the stoop of their family store, Kaseff Grocery, ca. 1931.

Introduction

As this book shows, the Southside of Indianapolis once served as a multi-cultural hub that housed people from all walks of life. Whether it was Jewish families who had emigrated from Europe in search of a better life, or African-American families who had fled the South

toward the industrial cities of the North, the Southside emerged as a neighborhood that provided a haven for these groups who often found themselves marginalized from the mainstream. This unique environment bred a tightly knit community with a tolerant and accepting attitude, and this sense of self-sufficiency manifested itself quite notably in the business community. This chapter will examine the various businesses that operated in and around the neighborhood, and it will also discuss the ways in which these businesses helped cultivate bonds within the community. Finally, it will look at how the

local businesses can serve to illustrate larger truths about the Southside regarding race relations, multiculturalism, and the like. All of the residents interviewed for this project seem to look upon their childhoods with a deep sense of fondness and nostalgia, and this certainly extends to their memories of the various businesses in and around the neighborhood.

Good Will, Close Relationships, and Credit



Employees of Kraft's Southside Baking Company at their pastry shop on the Northside.

Many of those interviewed for this project recall the good will extended to them by members of the business community. In a neighborhood where everybody seemed to know everybody else, the business owners also served as neighbors and family friends. The families living on the Southside did not have a great deal of wealth,

and simply making ends meet often proved to be a difficult challenge. One of the ways the local businesses helped to keep the community—their neighbors and friends—afloat was by extending informal credit to customers. Gerald Kraft, a member of the Ashkenazic community whose father owned Kraft's Southside Baking Company, recalled just this sort of arrangement:

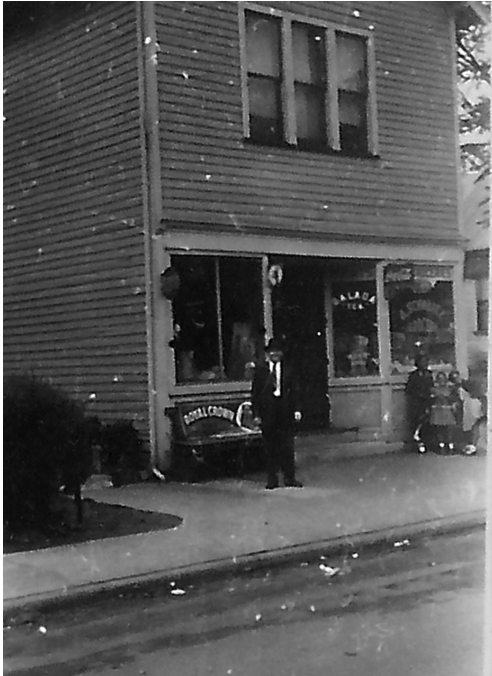
"In those days, you could buy something and pay it a dollar a week. All the grocery stores would have extended credit. Our grocery store had a credit for people who couldn't afford—you know, in those days a loaf of bread was maybe seven cents. And I remember my dad used to say, 'Ah, what am I gonna charge them? Just give them a loaf of bread.' So that's what you did."

Pauline Finkton, an African-American community resident, recalled similar informality and cordiality in her family's dealings with local businesses, many of them owned by members of the Jewish community:

“We had everything. We had your family grocery stores. And probably everyone has talked about it. You ran a bill. If you didn’t have the money to pay, they kept a little bill. And even if you couldn’t pay it off you’d pay a little of it as you went along. As long as you were a good paying customer you’d get credit.”

Sergeant Kim Mayfield, another African-American resident, had his own story about the neighborly practices of local business owners:

“We had Joe Herbrecht’s market on South McCarty [Street]. It had a little bit of everything. Just an old-time grocery store. This is how grocery stores were a part of the community. Mr. Herbrecht knew your grandmother and your grandfather. Money was always an issue, so Mr. Herbrecht would allow the families to run a bill. He would say you had a \$25 limit for the week. When dad would bring mom the child support—because my parents were divorced—we would go and pay off some of the bill. Without these types of people we would have had it seriously rougher. I understand they had to do business, but because they knew our family, they didn’t treat us like customers—they treated us like friends.”



Schwartz Grocery Store on South Capitol Street showing young children waiting to peruse the excellent candy selection.

Mrs. Henrietta Schwartz Mervis, whose parents owned Schwartz’s grocery store on Capitol Street, noted that her parents offered credit to local Jewish families and African-American families alike. Mrs. Mervis recalled that her mother was so soft-hearted that her father would claim that she was giving away their profits. She also noted that her father “also used to say that I was eating all of his profits, because we had the best candy in the city! My father used to visit all of the wholesale candy factories in the Midwest to make sure of that.”

While the extension of credit to neighborhood residents certainly served a much-needed social function, the kindness of local proprietors extended beyond issues of money. As stated elsewhere, the southside community was one in which families had personal relationships with everyone else. It was a neighborhood where all of the residents looked out for the children of others. In an interview with African-American resident Sharon Canon, she told a story that exemplifies this sense of mutual cooperation that existed on the south side:



Young Lea Goldstein Frankovitz stands in front of Passo's Drug Store. The inscription on the back reads: "To Baby Lee from Al and Izzy."

"It was just a neighborhood. Everybody knew everybody. But here's a story my grandmother used to tell me to show you how close the neighborhood is: Mr. Passo, who owned Passo's drug-store right there on the corner of Meridian and McCarty Street—my grandmother said the phone would ring. She'd pick up, and he'd be on the phone. 'Liz, you'd better

come down here and get Sharon. She done fell out on the floor again.' I was throwin' a fit 'cause I couldn't have something. My grandmother used to tell me about that, but that just shows you how close that neighborhood was, and it was a nice place to grow up. I have some fond memories."

Indeed, the action taken by Mr. Passo does indicate the level of neighborhood cohesion present during that time. In many areas, and certainly in *most* retail businesses today, a shop owner might have reprimanded Mrs. Canon, might have forcibly removed her from the store. However, such was not the case in that time and place. Instead, Mr. Passo, knowing the family, simply phoned her grandmother and cordially informed her of the situation. Many residents also remarked on how, at a time when most restaurants and other public spaces were still segregated, Passo's was not. Mr. Craig, whose family owned one of the African-American businesses on the Southside, shared the following recollection:



Two ads that appeared in the 1966 James E. Wood High School yearbook, courtesy of two very fondly remembered southside businesses, Passo's and Safrin's.

"Passo's was not segregated; they had a counter. They had a fountain where you'd stand up and you could get cherry cokes and stuff like that. Al Passo and his brother Izzy owned the drug store. [...] There was Efroymson's Department store. Then Vogel's grocery store was around the corner. There was a liquor store and right around the corner here was Dobbowitz. On

the other side of the street was Junemann's Tavern where Pauline [Finkton's] grandmother worked."

Drugstores were fondly remembered as gathering places in the community. Annie Calderon, a Sephardic resident, stated that,

"When I was growing up the biggest thing was we would go to one of the drug stores, at that time they had fountain drinks, and you would meet people there. They would let you sit there for hours. The longer you would sit there the more people you would see come in. Haag's drug store, and there was another one called Friedman's, and there was Passo's. Young people worked the fountains. If they did get a job they would work there. Or they would work in the grocery store, bagging groceries."

Sergeant Mayfield went on to discuss the effect that such friendly business practices had on his family in particular. His quote, intentionally or not, speaks to the ways in which such practices cultivated a strong sense of cohesion as well as how they fostered a safe and friendly environment in the community.

"Terry's market was Jewish. My mother rented from Terry's father. It was good. We didn't have money, but yet we survived. We didn't have to do it through stealing or breaking in homes. I never remember any of those stores being robbed. Not to bore you to death, but really, the whole essence of the community [was there] when the grocer looks out for you and knows your family and knows you. It's just good to have had people like that. And nice people. They never said to you, 'You owe me.' They were just every day, good."



Albert Hazen, owner of Terry's Market, ca. 1954, someone who is remembered very fondly by all of the neighborhood residents.



Terry's Market on Ray St., owned by Al Hazen, who named the shop after his daughter Terry. His son, Marty, had a much admired white convertible, which can be seen parked in front of the store.



Fannie Goldstein Cohen working at a southside grocery store, ca. 1924.

In fact, the owner of Terry's Market, Al Hazen, was so beloved by all members of the community that Mancy (John Mance Calloway), another African-American southsider, still carries a copy of Mr. Hazen's obituary in his wallet.

Gerald Kraft also remembers friendly relations with business people in the community:

"I remember when I was a kid, it was not unusual on an evening to sit outside your business just schmoozing. You had your wife and the children. And so you'd pass the Cohen poultry place, and you'd see Mr. Cohen and Mrs. Cohen and their kids. It was that kind of a society along Meridian Street. You knew one another."

Obviously, the importance of the businesses on the south side extended far beyond providing the day-to-day goods and services required in any community. The neighborly disposition of the whole community—and the fondness with which former residents recall their time there—was due in no small



The old Purol gas station on South Meridian.

part to the fact that local business owners seemed willing to go the extra mile for their customers. Of course, while business owners had to keep an eye on the bottom line, they also saw themselves as part of a larger community; and, indeed, at the time when the Southside was at its most vibrant, most of the business owners also lived in the neighborhood. Part of their business wasn't just to provide goods and services; it was also to help maintain the well-being of the neighborhood and its families.

Buying Local

Intrinsic in such explanations of the southside business community is that fact that the residents of the neighborhood did not travel far to go shopping. William Craig explains this phenomenon: "You didn't have to go downtown to get anything. They had a shoe store, department stores, and two big bakeries."


Anne Calderon recalls walking to procure goods, saying that nobody needed cars to get what they needed: "Everybody walked with a little wagon, or a little pushcart, because you were buying groceries. How can you carry all that?"

Similarly, Gladys Nisenbaum, another Sephardic resident, remembered her mother sending her out to the local stores to buy everything needed to prepare the Sabbath meal: “I remember going into the shops and the wonderful smells, of bread baking and coffee. Children were always sent to the local stores to pick up items for our mothers.”

Beatrice Miller, generally known as “Miz Pete,” also remembers this type of localized commerce:

“Oh my goodness. Shapiro’s, Passo’s, A&P, supermarkets—we had it all. There was a local supermarket, Kraft’s bakery. There was a supermarket on West Street. Wallace [Walts], I think. It was a large supermarket. We had Safrin’s and Efroymson’s. There was a Zuckerberg’s and a hardware store. At one time there were like three chicken markets. There were fish markets. You name it, and it was there.”

Many fruit and vegetable peddlers sold their fresh produce from mobile pushcarts. Mr. Nahmias explained that his “grandfather sold produce, in his pushcart,” which provided enough income to sustain the family. Mrs. Prince told us that her grandparents also started out delivering food to customers from a pushcart. The income gleaned from this enterprise later allowed the Shapiro family to buy a storefront and expand the business into the popular deli that it has since become.



If It Comes From
Shapiro's
It's got to be good!

808 S. Meridian
631-4041

cafeteria - delicatessen - carry-out

Shapiro's, still a southside institution, placed this ad in the 1968 James E. Wood High School yearbook, the “Wood Log.”

Street vendors were also local business people who were fondly recalled. Beverle (Miller) Kane and Letha Johnson Beverly shared a good laugh one day, as Letha told stories about “Happy” (real name Mordecai Saba, according to William Levy), a vendor who sold fruits and vegetables from a horse and wagon. His familiar cry was “De oranges, lemons, green beans!” but when residents approached him to make purchases, he inevitably said, “No gottee no oranges, no lemons, no green beans—I’ll be back tomorrow with something you want!”

Sam Passo, son of Al and Lee Passo, recalled as a young boy, visiting his grandparents on the Southside and hearing the call of the strawberry man on Saturday mornings—“Strawberries, strawberries, strawberries!” An *Indianapolis News* article from June 12, 1927 notes that one Abe Epstein was known as the “strawberry king.” The article states that Abe contracted for “hundreds of acres of Hoosier strawberries” grown in a district close to New Albany.

Another story about a local vendor can be found in Max Eisenstandig’s memoir of the old Jewish Southside in the 1920s and ‘30s. As he wrote:

“About the middle of the area on Union between McCarty and Ray lived the community ice man, Mr. Goldsmith. Orders for ice were on a four-sided card, usually placed in the front window of the house. Boys, mainly, would jump on the step in back of the wagon to get ice chips when Mr. Goldsmith split the 100 pound blocks. An ice box was usually on the back porch of most houses. Ice was put on the top of the box and would drain into a pan at the bottom of the box. Emptying the pan was usually left to a son of the family. If the family’s box was on a floor above soil, a drain could empty itself into the soil” (Eistandig 2005:2).

Today, much of the area in the central downtown has been re-branded as the “Wholesale District,” one of Indianapolis’ six cultural districts. That name probably does not resonate with many younger Hoosiers but this is where many prominent Indianapolis residents got their start. Naftali Eskenazi, for example, uncle of Sidney Eskenazi, was head of the produce establishment Eskenazi & Mordoh, Inc. on South Street near New Jersey. William Herschell, author of the 1937 *Indianapolis News* article writes that “South street one day would be a wholesale center because of the adjacent railroad facilities and broad streets affording trucking space.” Today we think of the growth of



Eskenazi & Mordoh produce stand at the original southside farmer's market, City Market.



Eskenazi & Mordoh wholesale produce trucks on the way to the City Market.

farmers' markets in Indianapolis as something new and trendy but actually, these bustling centers hearken back to that earlier era. Herschell's description of the seasonal bounty of crops found in the original City Market could be a contemporary description of any of Indianapolis' recently established markets. As he wrote, "Still, down here in this South street provender mark they now have new cabbage calling for corned beef. Head lettuce, another luxury unknown to early youth, lies at the curbside waiting for buyers. Peaches and plums are in, too, and the green peppers look most alluring." The recently established Southside farmers' market, located in a lot across the street from Shapiro's and now entering its third season, is a happy reminder of the way

things used to be and a successful reinvention of the way people used to buy and sell produce.

This type of intra-community commerce probably also had a hand in creating the strong sense of neighborhood identity that existed on the Southside. By not having to leave the community for food and goods, the residents cultivated the aforementioned sense of solidarity, in which the business owners and their customers had amicable and close relationships with one another.

Race Relations in the Business Community

One of the most noteworthy attributes of the Southside—and one of the focal points of the *Neighborhood of Saturdays* project—was the way that multiculturalism was built into the social fabric. The degree to which members of different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds interacted in the first half of the 20th century appears to have been remarkably *not* self-conscious. Years before the modern Civil Rights Movement in the 1950's and 1960's swept the nation with bus boycotts, freedom rides, marches, sit-ins, and the like, the humble Southside of Indianapolis was already ahead of the curve when it came to race relations. As with all other aspects of social life, a discussion of the business community can cast some light on this topic as well.

Before examining specific instances of integration in the southside community, one should first understand the general demographics of the neighborhood. African Americans settled in the community after migrating north, largely in an attempt to escape the widespread discrimination of the Jim Crow South. Anderson Murff describes this, saying that most of the African Americans on the Southside came from “Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, a few Alabamans, a few Georgians. But mostly from that area.” While the America that existed north of the Mason-Dixon certainly provided more economic opportunities for African Americans than did the South, they still faced a great deal of discrimination.

Meanwhile, the Jewish population on the Southside primarily came from European nations in an attempt to escape anti-Semitic policies as well as the ravages of the World War I. While many members of the Ashkenazic community had faced deeply oppressive policies in Eastern Europe, the Sephardic members of the southside neighborhood mostly came from Macedonia and northern Greece, both of which were part of the Ottoman Empire. They did

not face the same kind of overt violence, but plans to draft Jews into the Turkish Army in the run-up to the First World War was quite an incentive to seek new horizons.

A report issued by the Indiana State Government discusses the immigration of Jews to Indianapolis:

“While not the earliest settlement of Jews in Indiana, Indianapolis would become the center of the Jewish population in the state. The first Jews to the city came in 1849. The evolution of the Jewish community in Indianapolis was typical of the happenings statewide, with the first wave of immigrants being German Jews. Many of these Jews were peddlers, who took advantage of the blossoming city. [...] By the late 1860s, Eastern Europeans began moving into the city. What made Indianapolis unique was the ethnic diversity that allowed for many of the ethnic communities to found their own synagogues. In 1870, the Polish immigrants formed a prayer group that became *Sharah Tefella*. In 1884, the Hungarians organized *Congregation Ohev Zedeck*, and by 1889 the Russian community founded *Knesses Israel*. In 1906, a small group of Sephardic Jews settled in the city. Originally from Turkish Macedonia, they spoke Ladino, not Yiddish. These newest immigrants founded *Congregation Sephard of Monastir* in 1913.”

The report goes on to mention that German Jews prospered at a faster rate than others in the community, a fact due to their “greater willingness to assimilate” to the dominant American culture surrounding them.

These demographics of the Southside perhaps provide some insight into the cohesion of the neighborhood. During those years, the whole community—white or black, Sephardic or Ashkenazi, native-born or immigrant—occupied a space at the lower-middle range of the socioeconomic ladder. It is worth speculating that the cooperation stemmed largely from a sense of solidarity at being, in some sense, a social outsider in the United States. Although one might expect conflict to arise given the multicultural nature of the neighborhood, the exact opposite seems to have been the case. Certainly, rifts existed in the community, and these will be discussed briefly. However, by and large, the religious, nationalistic, linguistic, and racial divisions on the Southside seem to have been rendered unimportant given the social, economic, and geographical bonds present in the neighborhood. As Robert Moore put it,

“We [African Americans] and the Jews were all fleeing oppression and we found one another on the Southside. In the six block area that was our neighborhood, we didn’t know anything about racism or anti-Semitism.”

Scott Nahmias explains the importance of business in this process, particularly mentioning the importance of catering to groups speaking languages other than English:

“Not only for the businessmen, the Jewish businessmen. But back then the inner city, which [the Southside] was, [...] people used to shop in their neighborhoods. So I would say the businesses would have been very, very important—particularly for that community because many of the people couldn’t speak English.”

Again, the self-ownership and cooperation of the southside business community served the needs of its particular consumers. These struggling working-class families found themselves outside of the English-speaking, Nativist, Christian, and white middle-class culture that dominated the United States. This probably led to a sense of solidarity within the community, and it perhaps explains the relatively advanced level of racial integration that occurred on the Southside.

Gerald Kraft discusses the integration of the Southside not in terms of class solidarity; rather, he views it as a matter of simple geography. By living together, the community naturally found ways to coexist. He says:

“So we were integrated by our living together. Black and white. I went to Public School #22, which was integrated. My first little girlfriend was a little black girl who lived up the alley. Every day, we would meet and walk to school together. So the community, black and white, was pretty integrated.”

Whatever the reason, the neighborhood businesses appear to have been remarkably integrated when it came to both their hiring practices as well as their consumer bases. This is especially admirable relative to the rest of the nation during that era. The issue of discrimination in employment practices is dealt with elsewhere in this book, so this chapter will not delve deeply into that discussion.

Despite such widespread integration, institutional discrimination was not completely absent from the south side community. For an example of such racial iniquity, one can look at the example of the Oriental Theatre. Several of the Jewish participants in this project had fond memories of the Oriental, a movie house at 1100 South Meridian Street. Gerald Kraft recalls that “you’d walk into the Oriental on a Saturday night, and half the Jewish population of the Southside was there.” He also remembers raffles at the theater where people could win baskets of groceries.



The Oriental Theatre was a favorite recreational spot for Jewish kids in the neighborhood, who used to sneak in their African-American friends before the venue was desegregated in the 1950's

Esther Calderon and Saddelle Ray also have nostalgic memories of the theater:

Esther Calderon: “We would line up, those of us who were old enough to walk there. We would line up and our father would give us

each 11 cents, 10 to get into the theater where we would stay for a double feature, and the penny was for a grab bag. Frank's [Confectionary] was attached to the theater and the little bag was a penny, and it had popcorn and a prize. It was a separate confectionary. They made the malts and things, [but] it wasn't part of the theater."

Saddelle Ray: "Boy, would we have fun. We would take the whole row. After the movie during the week you would have to play Nyoka the Jungle [Girl]! It was the best baby sitter in the whole world"

Esther Calderon: "Not only that but the older boys would do the tap dancing routines because they would see Fred Astaire do the tap dancing. I mean it was really the good old times."

While white and Jewish children of the community seem to have greatly enjoyed their experiences at the Oriental Theatre, it was not officially welcoming to African-American members of the community. William Craig recalls having to sneak into the theater on weekends because of his race:

"No, the theater was not integrated. Well, I went to the Oriental a lot, but this is not part of the story. I'd go in the side door and just sit in the back. My friends would let me in. They'd always go. They would just be quiet. Nobody ever said anything."

African-American interviewee Henry Dabney confirmed that he did not go to the Oriental Theater as a child. "You didn't go there period when I was a kid. It got better after I left [the neighborhood]. When I was coming up, it was a no-no." The Oriental Theater seems to have officially integrated in the 1960s and was torn down due to the construction of I-70 about 10 years later.

Given our contemporary sensitivity to racism, this type of discrimination probably seems inexcusable—particularly when thrust upon a child as in Mr. Craig's case. However, a silver lining exists in the above memory. The fact that Mr. Craig's (presumably white) friends went out of their way to let him in through the side door itself says something important about race relations on the Southside. Even in the instances when the business community implemented racist practices—as in the case of the Oriental Theatre—the remarkable inclusion of the community at large effectively nullified them. This, in a somewhat inverted way, also speaks to the admirable level of integration within the community.

No matter the level of integration, Jews, both Ashkenazic and Sephardic, owned the vast majority of businesses on the Southside. In no small part, this was due to external *de facto* racism. For example, African Americans at that time faced significantly greater difficulty when it came to procuring start-up capital for a proposed business. This inability to secure a loan undoubtedly inhibited the African-American community from opening businesses on the same scale as the Jewish community. Furthermore, the Ku Klux Klan reemerged in the early and middle part of the 20th century in Indianapolis (and elsewhere). This type of race-based terrorism also played a hand in stunting the economic and entrepreneurial growth of the African-American community.

Additionally, the integrated nature of the larger community made it largely unnecessary for Black residents to open their own businesses. In highly segregated places, it makes sense that one would find Black grocery stores, Black butcher shops, and Black retail businesses. However, the fact that African Americans were welcome in almost all of the locally owned shops on the Southside changed this dynamic. Gerald Kraft corroborates this:

“I don’t recall any black businesses because in those days there was no distinction. A black could shop at any one of the grocery stores. A black could shop at any of the department stores down there. Zuckerberg’s, Efroymsen’s, our bakery [Kraft’s]. [...] So there was no reason why you had to have a Black grocery owner. You didn’t need it.”



Mrs. Rosetta Crain and, to her right, Brenda Marie Johnson’s Aunt Mary, cooking lunch at the B & M Tavern.

This fact, mixed with the aforementioned racism in bank lending practices, probably explains the relative scarcity of Black-owned and Black-operated businesses.

In spite of these barriers, there were still many African Americans who did manage to operate successful businesses in the community. B&M Tavern, Casablanca Bar, Mike Black’s Barbeque Pit (often called the

“Pit”), and Bill Owens Tavern were all owned by African Americans and catered primarily to the black community. African-American residents also shared their memories of these establishments. As Beverle Miller (Kane) recalled,

“The southside barbecue place was on the corner of McCarty and Illinois Street, and it was a barbecue pit where they’d barbecue your ribs and they made hamburgers and hotdogs. And they had a jukebox and a little area where you could go to dance. It was owned by Mike Black—some people called him Mack Black. He was also a property owner and landlord here in the community so everybody knew him. And, he also was a bootlegger! He was a staple of our community for many years. It was close enough to [Manual/Wood High School], so you could sometimes not make it to school!”



An interior view of Craig’s Funeral Home, originally located at 1002 S. Senate. It then moved to the Schwartz Grocery site on S. Capitol before I-70 came through.

In addition to these businesses, Craig Brothers Funeral Home opened on January 31, 1936 at 1002 South Senate Street. Later, it moved to 826 S. Capitol, which had been the home of Schwartz’ grocery store. Still in operation, Craig Brothers Funeral Home is one of the oldest African-American family-owned businesses still in operation in Indianapolis; it now resides at 3447 N. College Avenue.

Many businesses on the Southside, while not *owned* by African Americans, specifically catered to the black community. Most of these businesses were situated on Indiana Avenue. Gerald Kraft remembers what that area was like back then:

“Indiana Avenue in the late 30s and 40s was all black. It was our Harlem. All of the nightclubs were black, and that is where the black entertainers of the nation would come to entertain. And I’m talking about[...] entertainers who later became real famous—Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Ella Fitzgerald.”



Young people enjoy the Flanner House dance at the Senate YMCA. *Photo courtesy of IUPUI University Library Special Collections.*

The nightclubs and venues on Indiana Avenue were a staple for the black community of the Southside, serving as a sort of cultural hub. However, even this—the “Harlem” of Indianapolis—was not strictly segregated. Again, Gerald Kraft remembers:

“I spent a great deal of time on ‘The Avenue’ with my black friends, so that I was able in those days, for me to be able to physically

see all these wonderful entertainers that were coming through Indianapolis.”

Yet again, the fact that a young white kid could easily attend shows in a predominantly black environment serves as a testament to the integrated nature of the southside community.

Food Traditions

Another aspect of the business community that deserves discussion is its relationship to cultural and religious dietary restrictions. The fact that the Southside was comprised of minority groups—namely, Jews and African Americans—led to businesses catering to these particular groups. This fact augmented the attitude of self-reliance and autonomy present in the community, which probably also had a great deal to do with neighborhood cohesion and its sense of solidarity.

Both the African-American community as well as the Jewish community on the Southside had their own unique food cultures. On the one hand, the black community primarily ate what is commonly called “soul food,” or “real food.” Meanwhile, the Jewish community’s food had to be “Kosher”—that is, in accordance with Biblical and rabbinical restrictions on the consumption and preparation of food.



Some of the proud cooks of Etz Chaim stand by their delicious creations at the annual Sephardic bake sale.

Many of the Jewish-owned restaurants and food-related businesses produced Kosher foods. Shapiro's Delicatessen was started by Louis and Rebecca Shapiro in 1905 as a grocery store. The Shapiro family immigrated to the United States two years earlier from Russia, where Louis had worked as a supplier to the czar's navy. The grocery store he started eventually became the deli, which served as a staple for the Jewish community. The deli still exists today and also has a location in Carmel, and it remains a historical pillar of Jewish identity in Indianapolis.

Kosher laws have a great deal to say about the slaughter of animals. According to Jews, these rules help ensure that an animal experiences as little suffering and pain as possible throughout the killing. Alvin Mordoh recalls the process of killing an animal under the guidelines of *kashrut*, the relevant Jewish food laws:

"Well, there was about three or four chicken places. I remember my mother used to put the chicken in the basket and cover it with newspaper, and I would take it over to the *shochet* [Jewish slaughterer]. He would slit its throat, put it in a tin thing, and then he would give it back to me. I would take it to my mother, and she would pluck it and singe the meat over the fire to get the little spines out of it."

Leon Mordoh describes this same basic practice and its foundations in Jewish theology:

“It was in the middle of the block on about the ten-hundred street of Meridian. There was a rabbi there who would kosher the chicken. You’d have to kill a chicken in a certain way, in that you have to get all of the blood out because in the Jewish religion if you take up the blood you’re taking up the soul. So you don’t want to do that. You’ve gotta get rid of the blood.”

The existence of these special locations where the Jewish community could visit *shochets* speaks to the importance of *kashrut* [Kosher food laws] in the daily lives of southside Jews. Henrietta Schwartz Mervis told us about how her parents, owners of Schwartz Grocery Store on S. Capitol, used to get the chickens from the Kosher slaughterer and would pluck out the feathers, then selling the fresh meat to their customers.

Koshering meats in this way was crucial for the Jewish community. In addition to specific guidelines for slaughtering animals, there were more basic dietary restrictions. Pork products were unacceptable, as was the back half of a cow. Additionally, Jews cannot consume milk (and cheese) alongside meat in the same meal. Furthermore, certain types of animal fats cannot be consumed or used for cooking. David Regenstrief, whose family owned the Regen Baking Company on 826 South Meridian Street, remembers these dietary restrictions relative to their breads: “We were considered a Kosher baker. We did not use lard, and that is one of the reasons our bread was more expensive. Because it costs more to use shortening, not lard.” Mr. Regenstrief went on to talk about how, when he ran the bakery years later, he sometimes found himself at odds with local Jewish authorities:

“Every Passover, the rabbis would come down and want them to close for a week. I told them that if I depended on the Jewish population to make a living, I’d be broke. We sold to Jewish people, but there aren’t enough Jewish people who keep going to keep me going. So I can’t afford to close for a week. I’d give them donations, and they’d let me go.”

Lee Mallah describes the difficulty of mastering authentic Sephardic cooking:



Lee Mallah with her famous home-made "bourekas," a savory pastry, at the Etz Chaim Sephardic Picnic.

"You had to be a weather-man in order to stretch that filo dough because it had to be the right temperature. If it was rainy, you couldn't stretch it. They would start with a piece of dough that had risen and you could raise a child in the time it took that dough to rise! You had to bring it to a certain shape while it was rising. Then you put it on the table with a white sheet. You would walk around the table and stretch it and stretch it until it was like tissue cloth. Then they would make the spinach rolls."

Meanwhile, the African-American community's culinary culture drew influences not from Biblical laws but rather from "soul food" cuisine, which dates back to the Antebellum South. As mentioned briefly above, many restaurants existed to feed the African-American community's appetite for this unique food. Robert Murff remembers the importance of soul food in his family:

"We always ate real food [soul food]—Mom's home cooking. If you ate, then you were cool with momma. But if you didn't eat, she would always wonder what was up. All of the food was really fresh. The potatoes didn't come from a box, and the meat came directly from the slaughterhouse."

William Craig also remembers the food culture present on the South-side:

"Well at B&M, Aunt May used to make good food. She made soul food. There was soul food and Kosher food. We ate soul food, real food. You ever eat neck bones? You have to eat them alone. I eat chitlins. I eat everything on the pig but the oink. I love collard greens and cabbage. Kosher food was really expensive. It's handmade. I love them both and I rotate between them."

Mr. Craig's quote also illustrates that neither community—African American and Jewish—stuck rigidly to their own foodstuffs. Saddlele Ray, a member of the Sephardic community, remembers breaking kosher laws while growing up:

“Sometimes I'd eat there [with people I knew in the African American community], and it wasn't Kosher! The whole neighborhood, the Sephardics and the Blacks—it was just one great big community.”

The Decline of Southside Businesses

Respondents for this project attribute the decline of the southside community to various factors at different times. Many directly link the construction of I-70 to the changes in the neighborhood, yet the decline of the business community in that area certainly played a prominent role. As was the case in other neighborhoods, the move toward suburbanization and toward the Northside played a role in eroding the business base of the neighborhood. New malls were starting to open on the urban periphery and this cut into the ability of the neighborhood to sustain local businesses. Following World War II, many of the Jewish residents began to migrate north, first up to the area around Mapleton-Fall Creek and Broad Ripple, and later in the 1970's, further north up into the area around Hoover Road. The synagogues and other Jewish communal organizations were also migrating north.

Gerald Kraft discusses the dispersion of the community this way:



Bus advertisement for Kraft's Southside Baking Company.

“I would say in the early 50's [the Jewish community] began moving north. We still had the bakery [Kraft's Southside Baking Company] there, as I told you, and Shapiro's Delicatessen. But most of the—for example, the Jewish butcher had moved north, so there was no Jewish butcher on the Southside of Indianapolis. The poultry business

closed, so there was no poultry anymore on the Southside. Efroymson's closed. Zuckerberg's closed. So even on Meridian Street where [Kraft's Southside Baking Company] was, most of the Jewish businesses had closed or moved north."

Scott Nahmias corroborates this statement:

"By 1950, I'd say over half [of local businesses] were gone. The big ones, the old standbys—Shapiro's [Delicatessen], Regen [Baking Company], Kraft's [Southside Baking Company]—those places were still there. By the early 1970s, the construction of the interstate [I-70] basically split the neighborhood and took some of the businesses out also. But other than Shapiro's and maybe some new generations that moved down there because real estate was cheap, I would say as a rule all the old businesses were gone. By 1970, everything was probably gone. Even Passo's [Drugstore] had a fire in the early '70s and that space was taken over by Shapiro's, which expanded."

As noted in Mr. Nahmias' statements and elsewhere, the construction of I-70 also played a prominent, if not absolute, role in the destruction of the community. Robert Murff says, "Well, the I-70 project was the death knell. The neighborhood was already changing, but when that came through, it was the death knell." Anderson Murff agrees with a twinge of nostalgia: "It's hard to imagine that highway not being there, and all the houses lining up the streets."

David Regenstrief describes the changes that the neighborhood has undergone in subsequent decades:

"Geographically, it's changed tremendously. I go down there now, and there's Shapiro's, which is still on that corner. The parking lot next to it was Regen Baking Company. The Kraft building has been sold [...] All the businesses that were down there are closed."

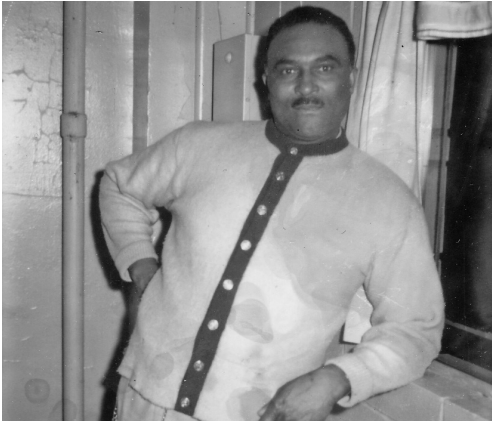
Today, a group of merchants along South Meridian is attempting to bring back the small business feel of the community that our project has recorded. Dennis Burton, owner of Goldman Jewelers, has been interested in the history of the neighborhood merchants and of the Jewish families who owned many of the local businesses. It is no coincidence that this chapter on local businesses is the longest—in all of our interviews, former



Dennis Burton, current owner of Goldman Jeweler's on South Meridian, listens with interest as Gladys Cohen Nisenbaum shares her memories of an earlier era of southside merchants.

Southsiders from all backgrounds relished sharing their accounts of the bustling business community. This project has attempted to trace the history of the southside neighborhood, and one can hardly understate the importance of the local business community in that endeavor. The shops and industries on the Southside had far-reaching implications, from the community's multi-cultural and multi-racial flavor to its general neighborly attitude. Through the conduct of local entrepreneurs and the specialized products they sold, the businesses served as one—if not the *primary*—mechanism for sustaining social cohesion.

"The Story of the B&M Tavern" **By Brenda Marie Johnson**



Brenda Marie Johnson's uncle, Edgar Johnson, relaxing after a hard day's work at the B&M Tavern.

A knock at the door had my father, Isom Johnson, in tears—something nobody had ever seen him do. By the time mother got there he was almost bent over and shaking his head. His older brother Edgar was standing there with his wife, Mary.

Dad said Uncle had left home (Mississippi) when he was only 14 years old, and he had not seen him since. He had convinced himself that his brother was dead somewhere. Yet, here he stood at 819 S. Kenwood after almost 20 years.

After getting to know him through the years, we found that Uncle had a real sense of adventure. He was an avid storyteller, and he could tell you stories about his life that would make you just shiver. In a Huckleberry Finn kind of way, Uncle said he had made his way from Mississippi to Houston, Texas working on the railroads. He was a tall, slim, muscular sort, and I somehow felt he was well suited for that lifestyle. Houston was a long way from home, but he had met Aunt Mary (May, was what we called her) and had gotten married. I can't pinpoint an exact time frame that all this happened, but it had to be before 1949 when my sister Mary was born because she is my aunt's namesake.

Uncle and Aunt May quickly became instrumental members of our immediate family in a very definitive way; when we needed extras it was usually Uncle and Aunt May who would take on the problem. They never had children, so we got a lot of attention from them—even though sometimes we really, really didn't want it.

Aunt May worked Hard at a laundry here in town, and Uncle worked for a while in some factory. I remember him getting badly injured on that job and being on crutches for a very long time. He had a pronounced limp when he walked for the rest of his life. I think that limp factored into his going into his first big-time, entrepreneurial adventure of "bootlegging." Be that as it may, the Indianapolis Vice Squad was kept extremely busy by his business because Uncle was very good at his job.

Before long, Uncle and Aunt May got a break from a Jewish tavern owner by the name of Mel Bracken. Mr. Bracken's tavern was located in the same block as Shapiro's on South Meridian, right past Regen's Bakery in a brick building that ended at the alley. Mr. Bracken sold Uncle and Aunt May the building and the liquor license, and so he began his second business endeavor with the B&M Tavern.

If I'm not mistaken, Uncle was the first black man who owned a business

on the well-known South Meridian Street strip. We thought that was pretty good for a man who could neither read nor write. But be not mistaken: he could count money better than most fiscal agents. Aunt May was the one with the business head on her shoulders.

Don't be mistaken otherwise as well by the type of business he owned. It was a funny thing: with all that liquor selling/handling going on, Uncle's drink of choice was milk! He would take a drink socially every now and then in celebration, but always told us in his stuttering tongue: "Now, I'm here to tell ya... you can't drink alcohol and sell it, too!" That statement has proven true on a number of things!

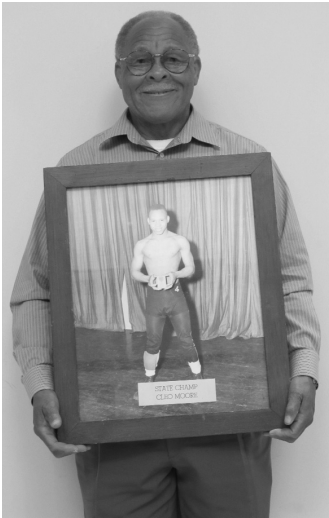
I am so grateful to have had he and Aunt May in my life, and appreciative for all of the contributions for our overall well being.

Ironically, a few years ago a co-worker and I talked about our families, and she wondered, with all the children in my family, how often we had "hungry" days at our house. I thought about it for a while and was glad to tell her that I didn't have any.

You see, when money ran short in our house, my dad was an excellent fisherman and went fishing. Uncle had a keen eye and could shoot—near or far—any rabbit or squirrel that dared crunch on a leaf with its paw. Both Mother and Aunt May were excellent cooks and could make anything melt in your mouth

Our lives were not perfect, by any stretch of the imagination, but they were, for the most part, enjoyable.

Cleo Moore, State Wrestling Champion, and Regen's Bakery



Mr. Cleotha Moore, holding a photo of himself from 1960, the year he was the State Wrestling Champion representing James E. Wood High School.

"Regen's Bakery was one of two Jewish bakeries in the neighborhood. One was Kraft [Southside Baking Company], and one was Regen's. And I remember starting to work there when I was probably around 13 years old, following my brother. I wasn't doing anything big. I was scrubbing floors with the scraper, scrubbing the burnt spots off of the ovens—hot work! It wasn't glamorous at all, but it was a job. I really loved that job, and I worked there every Saturday and Sunday. Sunday I would come in early in the morning and put orders together for bakery deliveries. In any event, I was sold on the job, so I wasn't going anywhere.

Also, I had started wrestling, and at this time I was a senior in high school. I didn't consider myself anything special, but I started wrestling there. By this time, we were heading into the city tournaments. I'd never been at that level before, so I really didn't know what to expect. On Friday, my coach told me that he'll see me Saturday morning. I didn't think a whole



Cleo Moore's medal which recognizes his achievements in the sport of wrestling.

lot of that, except I wasn't gonna leave—I wasn't gonna go to that tournament—because I had a job to clean those floors and scrub those ovens. So I didn't go. Early that morning, my coach came [to the bakery], and he asked for me. I didn't know that he knew where I worked, but apparently he talked to my friends. And I was embarrassed when he was in there because my boss—you know. So [my coach] went and explained to [my boss] what I was doing, and he said, 'Well, yeah, sure! Go ahead. Go ahead!'

I was sweating. I said [to my boss], 'Ok, well I'll clean those up.' I didn't know when I was going to do it, but I said, 'I'll come and clean it during

the week.' I never did get around to it.

So the next week, I was in the regional tournament, and I didn't expect—I didn't know that I had to go again. I had won the sectional. I was, you know, dusting my hands off. And I found out that if you win this regional, now you go to the next level. So I went to the next—but I didn't realize that I had to go all day, the same way. So, the same thing was repeated. My coach came because I didn't show up—I didn't show up at school [for the tournament], didn't tell my parents or anything like that that I was gonna go anywhere else—and so he came and got me out again. So I reluctantly told [my bosses] that, 'Hey, look, I'll be back, and I'll get those ovens.' And I didn't do it because I was going to school all the rest of the time. I couldn't do it. [...]

Then the semi-state came up the next time—the exact same thing. I had never been at that level, but I was winning them all [the wrestling matches]. That didn't mean a whole lot to me because I still had those dirty ovens to try to clean up and those dirty floors.

So, long story short, I went to the semi-state championship not realizing that that meant that I had to go back *again*! I wasn't very smart [laughs]—I was not very smart in figuring that out. As it turned out, everybody else was rooting for me, and I'm trying to figure out how I can get out of doing this thing. In any event, I came back the next week, and I was wrestling this guy who had beat me in the semi-state—it was semi-state, and that year the first *two* places [advanced] to the next level. I wasn't expecting that. I figured, well, he beat me, so I'm getting kinda cool now. But at any rate, I went there, and I was losing early on. I was losing because I figured, "Well, I've already lost to this guy once! Why am I out here straining myself?" I was on the mat, getting beat. [...] Somehow—I don't know if I've told you this before—but somehow, I looked at a balcony and saw my mother. She's never gone to any sporting event. Somehow, in all this crowd, I saw her, and it was that spark at the end of that particular match—that spark. I got up. I couldn't bear just being dusted on a mat like that. Got up, and I beat him by one or two points—I don't remember the [exact] amount.

But I went on, and I won the state championship during that particular time. That was just so gratifying—I still didn't realize what all that meant. But, in

any event, it was Regan's Bakery, you know. I was more dedicated to them than anything in school. But by winning that, I was able to go on to school, to college. Nobody in my family had gone—nobody. I didn't know how I was going to make it, but I was able to get a partial scholarship and wrestle and go on. Since that time, we've established, in my branch of the family, a scholarship fund—one that's designed to encourage the kids to go on to school. And we've had several people. My youngest brother went on, and he's now a doctor in Marion, Indiana. There are others that are continuing to benefit. It's not a big scholarship. It's just designed, at least, to give them some encouragement to go."

—Cleo Moore



Cleo Moore (in center) stands with members of his family, including brothers and cousins, in front of their house at 937 S. Illinois St. around 1948-49.

CHAPTER 6

“That Was My Job Then”

Employment and Labor

By Benjamin J. Linder with research contributed by Ryan Logan
and Marcela Castro Madriaga

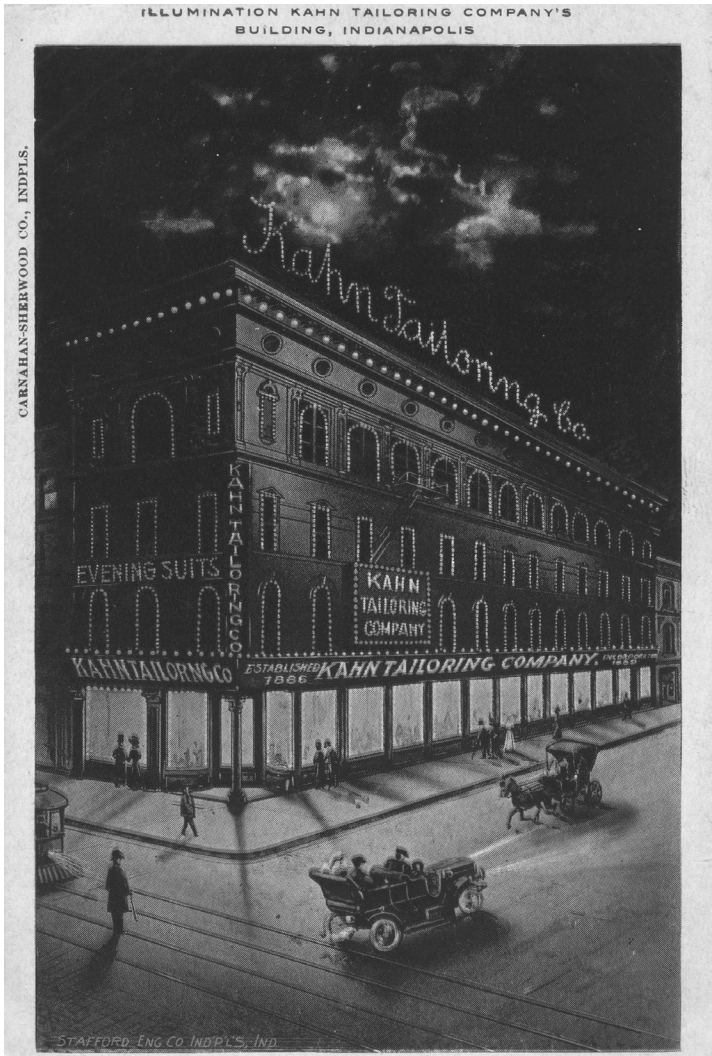
Introduction

Because working-class people made up the bulk of the southside neighborhood, the members of the community found employment in a wide variety of settings—from manufacturing to sales, from scrap metal to pharmaceuticals. The previous chapter on local businesses examines some of the most important and influential local enterprises and shop owners in the community. This chapter will focus specifically on the issue of employment. It will spotlight some of the larger companies that offered jobs to southside residents; it will also discuss issues of racism and discrimination in hiring practices, and it will examine “off-the-books” work done by teenagers and children. Jobs offer one of the bedrock foundations of any community, and in its heyday, the Southside was no exception to this rule. People’s livelihoods can explain much more than simply how they paid their bills, and employment on the Southside certainly has a great deal to tell us about the general community.

Major Employers of Southside Residents

Although small businesses abounded on the Southside, most of these operations did not require a significant workforce. Consequently, most of the

Southside residents found employment with larger companies. Perhaps the most important of these for the Jewish community, particularly for immigrants from Monastir, was Kahn Tailoring Company, a garment business founded by Henry Kahn in 1903. According to a report issued by the Indiana government, nearly 50% of the Sephardic community in Indianapolis worked for Kahn Tailoring Company, including some women who worked there before they were married. With such a massive workforce, the company—along with several others—maintained an important presence in the community.



An old postcard from the 1920s of Kahn Tailoring Company, once a major employer of Sephardic immigrants on the Southside.

That same government report tells the story of Kahn Tailoring Company:

“The garment trade in Indiana, like that in America, attracted a large number of Jews. In Indianapolis, the largest garment manufacturer, Henry Kahn (1860-1934), founded Kahn Tailoring Company in 1903. Kahn was born in Bloomington in 1860 to immigrant parents. The family moved to Indianapolis in 1866; Kahn attended public school and went to Butler University. He opened a small tailoring shop in 1886 on East Washington Street near Meridian Street. In 1903, he founded Kahn Tailoring Company—one of the country’s largest manufacturers of men’s suits and military uniforms. There was a sales room in the Kahn Building at Meridian and Washington and a factory on Capitol Street, which still stands.”

Henry Kahn died in 1934, and Mortimer C. Furscott, Kahn’s son-in-law, took over operations as the company’s new president. Under Furscott, Kahn Tailoring saw further expansions in its business. Eventually, the company opened 12 stores nationwide. In 1954, Kahn Tailoring merged with Globe Tailoring of Ohio, and the company’s base of production was subsequently relocated from Indianapolis to Cincinnati. Later, in the 1960s, Kahn Tailoring would change its name to Hilton-Kahn Tailors, which did business from E. Market Street. By 1970, the Kahn name would disappear from the clothing business altogether.

Several Sephardic residents from the Southside reminisced with us about their parents’ memories of working at Kahn Tailoring. As William Levy recalls,

“As soon as my father came here, he found a job with Kahn Tailoring. He claims to have been one of the supervisors. He knew seven languages like a lot of them did. He knew, and spoke them fluently... He was a tailor, who had his own shop, after he finished with Kahn Tailoring.”

Sadelle Ray shared this memory with us:

“My mother worked at Kahn Tailoring, a number of the Sephardic people worked there. She worked half a day on Saturday’s at Kahn Tailoring so I would clean the house and get it ready and I would take the bus and I’d meet her at Market and Illinois and we’d go to lunch.”

N.K. Hurst Company existed as another major employer of southside residents. At one point, the company—which dealt in the distribution of coffee, tea,

“MY business succeeds, because—of the unvarying quality of Kahn Tailored Clothes.” So says the Kahn representative in your town. He is your nearest authority on clothes. ¶ He will tell you that Kahn Tailored Clothes have built up his business because of the unfailing satisfaction they give to the man who wears them. You will respect the Kahn label when he shows you what it stands for. ¶ He will explain how, by producing in volume individual merchant-tailored clothes, we will satisfy you—no matter how discriminating you are—with a Kahn Tailored suit or overcoat at \$20 to \$45.

If you have not made the acquaintance of your Kahn representative—our seal is in his window—please write us for an introduction.

KAHN TAILORING COMPANY
OF INDIANAPOLIS

An advertisement for Kahn Tailoring Company from the magazine, *The Saturday Evening Post*.

and sugar—drew about 50% of its employee base from the southside community. Even today, the company operates as N.K. Hurst Beans and draws around 20% of its workers from the same southside community.

Needham King Hurst founded the company in 1938. Less than ten years later in 1947, Hurst moved the company to its current location at 230

West McCarty Street and had switched to packaging dry beans for sale to grocery stores. N.R. Hurst, the grandson of N.K. Hurst and current owner of the company, explained this shift from coffee, tea, and sugar to selling beans:

“He was actually in the sweetener business. Sugar was the big item. He also sold tea and coffee. He was a re-bagger, and then he would sell sugar to the Coca-Cola Company, and like coffee to some of the grocery stores. After WWII, he figured that all those GI’s coming home from Europe[...] must have been eating beans, so they must want beans when they get home. We started packaging beans up in New York St. [a previous location] and then continued here.”



Unloading a shipment of beans to be processed at N.K. Hurst and Co., 1950s.

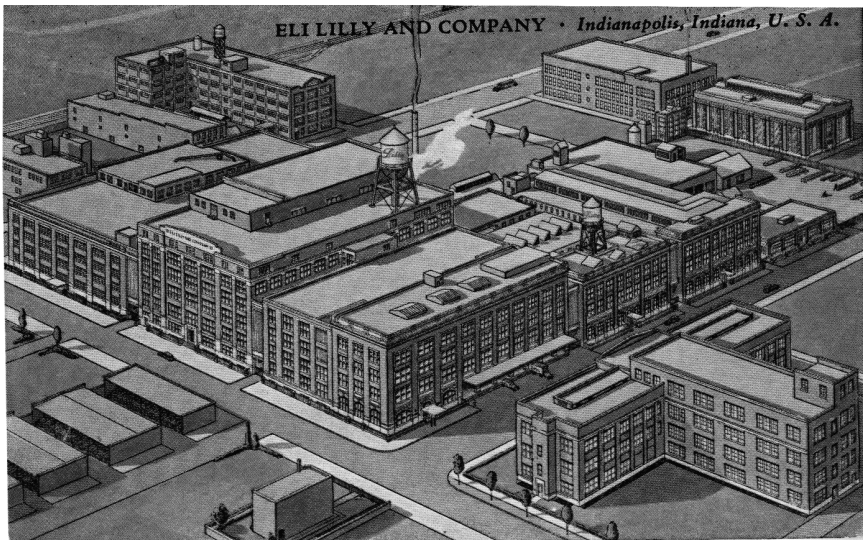
Still operating today, the company has remained in the same location—230 West McCarty Street—since 1947, an area it now shares with the Indianapolis Colts’ Lucas Oil Stadium.

According to an archived issue of the *Indianapolis Times*, Atkins was another local company that grew to include a workforce comprised partially of southside occupants. Trading in the business of saws, E.C. Atkins founded the company in 1857 after moving to Indianapolis from Cleveland, Ohio. Born in

Connecticut and coming from a family of saw makers, Atkins trained with his family for a few years and attended school for a few more until he decided to start his own business. In 1857, he borrowed \$500, purchased a few amenities, and founded Sheffield Saw Works on East Street. After fires twice destroyed his work shed, Atkins relocated to his final shop at 402 S. Illinois Street.

Eventually becoming one of the leading saw manufacturers, Atkins employed around 800 employees. In light of several factors—the Depression of the 1930s, the defense efforts of WWII, the post-war conversion, the war in Korea, taxation, etc.—Atkins sold the plant to the Borg-Warner Corporation in 1952. In 1960, the people of Greenville, Mississippi offered \$100,000 to move the plant to their city, a deal sweetened further by the new location's closer proximity to necessary raw materials. Consequently, the plant in Indianapolis closed its doors and moved south, costing approximately 400-500 local employees their jobs. After the company left, a post office was built in its place.

Although they initially only hired African Americans for janitorial services and did not hire Jews until later in the 20th century, Eli Lilly & Company still deserves some discussion because of its undeniable economic impact on the whole city of Indianapolis. Founded in 1873 by Colonel Eli Lilly, the company has grown to become one of the largest and most important pharmaceutical corporations in the world.



Eli Lilly and Company, a pharmaceutical firm founded in Indianapolis in 1876, is not only a major institution on the Southside; it was also once an employer of southsiders.

Eli Lilly also brought a great deal of attention and economic growth to Indianapolis. Since its founding, it has required the construction of new railroads, a new water supply system, and new roads. In addition to such infrastructural projects, the company also existed—and continues to exist—as a major philanthropic force. In 1937, Eli Lilly started an endowment with \$280,000 worth of market shares. By 1987, the company's charitable gifts had grown to about \$698 million in donations. Today, their endowment stands around \$2 billion. Of its national and international philanthropic projects, Eli Lilly continues to give 5% of its earnings to projects in Indianapolis. Even the Concord Center on the Southside, a partner in this *Neighborhood of Saturdays* project, has benefited from the charity of Eli Lilly & Company. Robert Murff, who was one of the first African Americans with a PhD to be hired in a professional capacity at Lilly, explained such humanitarianism:

“I know for a fact that Lilly has been one of the primary philanthropists that have donated to supporting Indianapolis. For instance, you can look at the Concord Center, which was one of the original community chests. It was supported by United Way early, and Lilly was always a primary supporter of that; and then funding for other things later on, such as even Babe Denny Park and some other things.”



Lena Claypool, grandmother of Pauline Finkton, returning home from a hard day's work at Paul Junemann's German Tavern, once located at South Meridian and Ray St

Another important sphere for work for lots of southsiders, particularly African-American women, was service work. Pauline Finkton recalled her family's experience working for Junemann's German Tavern on Meridian Street:

“I was named after Paul Junemann who owned the tavern and restaurant at 953 S. Meridian Street. My father and my grandmother both worked there. My father did janitorial work and my grand-

SLIT HERE TO OPEN

PAY ROLL STATEMENT
(UNDER FLAP)
IS YOUR RECEIPT FOR DEDUCTIONS

Employee Lena Claypool

S. S. Acct. No. 310-10-6652


Pay Roll No. _____

Employer _____

Employer's Idem. No. _____

Period Ending 12/15

Date Paid 11

 No. 2423 D

Lena Claypool's weekly pay packet from February 1952. She was a cook and dishwasher at Junemann's Tavern.

mother was an assistant cook and a dishwasher. I remember that Mrs. Junemann used to make us beautiful velvet dresses for Christmas. Mine was red and my two younger sisters got ones made of green velvet.... My grandmother lived with us. She would always bring home baskets of surplus food from Junemann's. ”

Discrimination in the Workplace

As with most social institutions of the era, employment on the Southside of Indianapolis was forced to confront the realities of race relations and racial discrimination. The multi-ethnic and multi-racial demographics of the neighborhood have been discussed elsewhere in this book. As in most

other realms, the residents of the southside community appear to have been ahead of the curve when it came to equal employment opportunities.

While the African-American community appears to have faced the brunt of discriminatory hiring practices, such practices also affected the Jewish community. Cecile Nahmias recalled some anecdotal evidence about discrimination at a local department store: “When I came here, there were only two Jewish women I knew who worked at L.S. Ayres, and both of them didn’t have Jewish last names.”

When the father of Scott Nahmias applied for a job with Coca-Cola Company, he did not receive it, probably on the basis of his ethnic-religious identity. Scott Nahmias said, “I remember dad had a job while he was at Butler, and

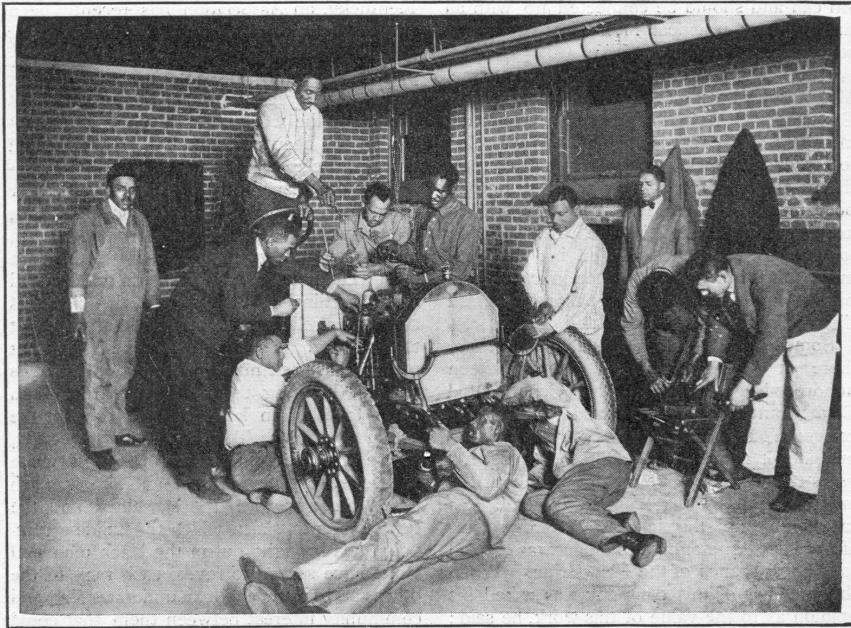


A group of girls pose in front of the Southside Equipment Company.

Coca-Cola came asking for the best guys. Everyone got hired except for my father and a black guy.” Clearly, Jews experienced some degree of discrimination when it came to finding jobs.

African Americans faced racist challenges in hiring practices as well, and these were often more overt and less anecdotal than the discrimination faced by the Jewish community. Until 1963, the Eli Lilly Company, the aforementioned pharmaceutical giant based in Indianapolis, did not have any African-American employees doing “degreed” work. Instead, the African Americans on the payroll could only perform jobs like janitorial work or maintenance duties. Robert Murff, who spent 34 years working for Lilly, explained the company’s discriminatory history: “Lilly announced in 1952 the end of segregation—that is, within Lilly corporate. However, that did not happen until 1963, when Lilly hired the first African American as a degreed employee.”

Part of the blame for such racist and discriminatory employment practices at big companies belongs to the various workers’ unions in the country during those years. Despite all of the progressive reforms earned by the Labor Movement in the 20th century—national minimum wage, 40-hour work week, child labor laws, and so on—the labor unions in the first half of the 20th century often found themselves at odds with Civil Rights activists and movements for racial equality. This racism primarily stemmed from natural economic concerns: the



AUTOMOBILE CLASS FOR COLORED MEN AT THE INDIANAPOLIS Y. M. C. A.

Young African-American men training to be auto mechanics at the old YMCA downtown (1914).

white labor force that began organizing in the late 19th century feared that African Americans, recently freed after the Civil War, would potentially flood the labor market with cheaper workers. As industrialization continued to sweep across the United States, these race-based fears in the minds of white workers stayed enormously potent among labor unions. For the most part, this led to deep-rooted segregation and overt racism in the Labor Movement and its unions. Incidentally, one of the only unions to challenge this general rule existed in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), or the Wobblies. An openly Communist organization, the IWW welcomed African-American workers into its ranks, which led to a spike in self-identified Socialists/Communists in the United States between the 1920's and the 1940's. Although the IWW broke the racist mold of most labor unions, the vast majority still retained their discriminatory practices.

Gerald Kraft, whose father founded Kraft's Southside Baking Company, recalls the special arrangements his father made with local union bosses in order to sidestep their racist hiring practices and membership requirements:

“Now in our bakery right after the war, we became unionized.[...] You had the bakers, and then you had the salesmen, the men who were driving our trucks. The teamsters organized our salesman. So our sales crew was teamster union, and our bakers were the baker’s union. And the people in between that handled the distribution[...] had to join the baker’s union. Now in those days those unions would not permit you to hire black people. So from Day 1 that I can remember, ‘cuz I grew up in that bakery from when I was old enough to stand up, we always had colored people in the bakery. And I later began to realize that the unions, when they came in, would say, “We’re gonna turn a blind eye.” Because my dad was adamant that he wasn’t gonna fire anybody because they were not [white].[...] We ended up paying dues for them—the amount of the dues that a white baker had to pay to the union to belong. My dad paid that same amount for our African-American people, but they were not members of the union. Because of that arrangement, the union was able to turn a blind eye to the fact that we had black people on our staff.”



Phillip Kraft, founder of Kraft's Southside Baking Company, poses with a group of his employees

Mr. Kraft's story does more than illuminate the widespread racism in hiring practices during the early and middle 20th century. It also speaks to the way in which such employment discrimination, while still present among the local family businesses on the Southside, did not exist to nearly the same degree as it did more generally on a national scale.



Kraft's Southside Baking Company, long a neighborhood mainstay, after they built an addition on the original building.

Many African Americans also found employment at Kingan's, a meatpacking company. Founded in 1845, Kingan's began selling meats in the north of Ireland. In addition to exporting their products, the company also imported American meats. Kingan's was originally only active during the winter months when meat was kept cold via natural climate, but after a series of "costly experiments," Kingan's was able to apply artificial refrigeration, which allowed for production year round. In the early 1900s, Kingan's capacity for animal processing was 10,000 hogs, 1,500 cattle, 1,000 sheep, and 1,000 calves. It is apparent from the Jewish restrictions on meat that this quantity did not mean lower quality. William Craig recalled the presence of meatpacking companies like Kingan's on the Southside:

"There was Kingan's Meatpacking and also Stark & Wetzel [another meatpacking house]. There were all different brands that competed with each other. After Stark & Wetzel moved out of there, King



An ad for a product from Kingan's, a beef and pork processor where many African-American southsiders were employed.

David's moved in and they did the Kosher meat. They did the hides, whatever you do with those to make coats and stuff. They did that at a place across the street there. We used to call it 'the stink place.'"

The majority of participants in this *Neighborhood of Saturdays* project—regardless of race—have fond memories of the Southside and do not recall the same sort of crushing racism

present elsewhere in America during those years. Several African Americans whom we interviewed recalled fondly working for Jewish merchants on the Southside.



The Flood of 1913 caused serious damage to the Kingan's meatpacking plant.



Like Kingan's, Stark & Wetzel was another large meat packing house on the Southside where many African Americans worked.

This lack of discrimination on the Southside probably stems from a variety of factors. First, the geographical proximity of the Jewish and African-American communities created countless opportunities for interaction with members of the other ethnic and racial communities. This increased communication, as is

often the case, almost certainly led to a breaking down of the ignorance that leads to prejudice and oppression of all sorts.

In addition, the community included white Jews as well as African Americans, but any sort of racial tension was largely diluted by their solidarity at being two historically and politically marginalized peoples. As mentioned elsewhere, the Jewish community of the Southside came largely as immigrants attempting to escape the oppression and discrimination of Europe in the wake of the First World War. The Sephardic Jews arriving in Indianapolis were further marginalized by the more settled and often more affluent Ashkenazic community. Meanwhile, the African-American community came largely from the South to escape the Jim Crow era that followed the Civil War. Robert Moore recalls having to flee Mississippi under the cover of night after his uncle fought a white man. As he told us,

"We were persecuted in a sense, and we migrated up here [from Mississippi] for a quality of life. We settled on the Southside and mixed and mingled with all the Jews. Thus comes the story. The Jews came here because of their persecution. [African Americans] came because we were persecuted. We all stayed in a little six square blocks—no segregation. We lived next door to them."

These facts probably help to explain the cohesion and cultural pluralism of the neighborhood. Regardless of race or religion, the various communities on the Southside existed as social outsiders in the United States. As the previous

chapter discusses, such solidarity perhaps rendered the religious, nationalistic, linguistic, and racial divisions relatively unimportant given the social, economic, and geographical bonds present in the neighborhood.

Robert Murff touched on this fact when he discussed the importance of the Jewish population in the United States as a force for racial equality. Throughout American history, Jews have sought to help ease the oppression of the African-American community, probably in part because Jews have a pre-disposed sympathy/empathy for discrimination. Putting the realities of the Southside in historical context, Mr. Murff explained it this way:

“It should be particularly noted that the Jewish community has always employed African Americans in their businesses to some degree or another. I think you have to remember, historically, the Jews were the ones who helped fund and found the NAACP. So, when they lived here with us, those sorts of things were suitable [practices]. And so that was always part of being helpful with them there. Also, there were other things, not only the employment that allowed blacks to do business with [Jews]. There was always that free exchange, so it was a self-nurturing community within itself.”

Whatever the reason, the Southside neighborhood appears to have been remarkably ahead of the curve when it came to racial equality. This becomes especially clear in light of the hiring practices of larger companies like Coca-Cola and Eli Lilly versus the small mom-and-pop operations owned by neighborhood residents themselves.

Beyond Wages: Employee Benefits on the Southside

Employment in the southside neighborhood often played a more important social function beyond the obvious role of providing regular paychecks. Many of the major employers offered special benefits and opportunities to their workers. Such practices provided a huge advantage to the southside community, whose residents often faced overwhelming linguistic, racial, ethnic, nationalistic, and socioeconomic barriers to achieving the American Dream of stability and comfort. The benefits provided by major employers of neighborhood residents helped bridge this gap.

As mentioned above, Eli Lilly & Company's roots in Indianapolis led to huge advances in the city's infrastructure. Due to the logistical requisites of

doing business, Eli Lilly & Company helped fund and construct new railroads, water supply systems, and roads. In addition to general projects like this, which served to benefit the entire city, many of the southside employers had specific benefits for workers that surely aided in their transition into America and their ascent of the socioeconomic ladder.

Kahn Tailoring offered such benefits to its workforce. A report issued by the Indiana State Government discusses the company's treatment of its employees thusly:



KAHN AND MERCHANTS' BANK BUILDINGS



"Plantation" Bacon—Fine for Boiling

A page from a souvenir booklet about Indianapolis printed by Kingan & Company, showing the Kahn Tailoring building downtown.

"The company offered social services for their employees. A social welfare department provided for the needs of all employees, especially those new to the city. Social gatherings were held at the office and during lunch, a factory orchestra played music in the cafeteria."

Other benefits provided by Kahn Tailoring, whose workforce employed a disproportionately large amount of southside Sephardic Jews, included a house physician, night school, health care, and a savings department. Clearly, the company had an interest in treating its workforce well and maintaining a general level of well being among its many employees.

Another Jewish-owned southside business was the Real Silk Company, which was originally founded in 1922 by the

Goodman family. It was mostly known for manufacturing hosiery. During the Depression, the company ran into financial difficulties and almost closed. It was eventually revived in 1932 when Gustav Efroymsen assumed control of the business. The company was then challenged by labor struggles in the mid-1930s when worker strikes broke out over wages and 16 strikers were arrested. The company survived and maintained a factory in Indianapolis until the early '1950s when, following the death of Gustav in 1946, his son Robert assumed control of the business. Nonetheless, many southside residents recall both the hosiery and the factory with affection.

THE REALSILK

Wardrobe

SYSTEM

of buying hosiery

MORNING
AFTERNOON
EVENING



COSTUMES BY
BERNARD GORDON
HAT—FRIDAY BY
NELSON

**HOW TO SAVE MONEY ON YOUR SILK HOSIERY
AND LOOK MORE SMARTLY DRESSED**

The average woman often spends 25% more money than necessary for silk hosiery because of a hit-or-miss method of buying.

Women with the most money often spend far less—and look smarter—because they plan ahead.

For years Realsilk has called on women in their homes and talked over hosiery needs with them. This has given Realsilk a blueprint of the nation's hosiery buying habits and has led to the "Wardrobe System" of buying.

Your Realsilk representative can tell you all about this smart buying plan—how many colors and how many pairs of each weight you need for the greatest economy and style.

Because there is time to sit down quietly and plan out a sound hosiery future, fewer mistakes are made.

Because the stockings come direct from the manufacturer you can always re-order and be sure of the same successes—the same quality, the same fit.

Women with money and high fashion standards usually buy two weights in

two colors. This gives them a daytime and an evening hose in colors that are right for them and their own skin tones.

It saves time because you buy only two or three times a year when the average woman buys twenty.

It saves money because the odd stocking always has a mate.

It saves your nerves and takes all the terror out of hosiery accidents.

Tucking away six or more pairs of beautiful hosiery in exactly the right fit and color carries with it a thrill.

It's the new Realsilk way to more style on less money.

REALSILK HOSIERY MILLS, INC.
Indianapolis, Ind.

You do the selecting



We do the work

Practical Combinations

6 PAIR <small>wardrobe</small>	4 pair style 94 (daytime) 2 pair style 104 (evening) or 4 pair style 104 (daytime) 2 pair style 200 (evening)
9 PAIR <small>wardrobe</small>	6 pair style 94 (daytime) 3 pair style 104 (evening) or 6 pair style 104 (daytime) 3 pair style 200 (evening)
12 PAIR <small>wardrobe</small>	9 pair style 94 (daytime) 3 pair style 104 (evening) or 9 pair style 104 (daytime) 3 pair style 200 (evening)

NOTE: 12 Pair Wardrobe is the most economical.

Style 94 (Realsilk "Steadies") service chiffon of remarkable wearing quality.
 Style 104—Sheer chiffon.
 Style 200—Ultra-Sheer 2-thread chiffon

All available in smartest new shades.
 Special discounts on quantity orders.

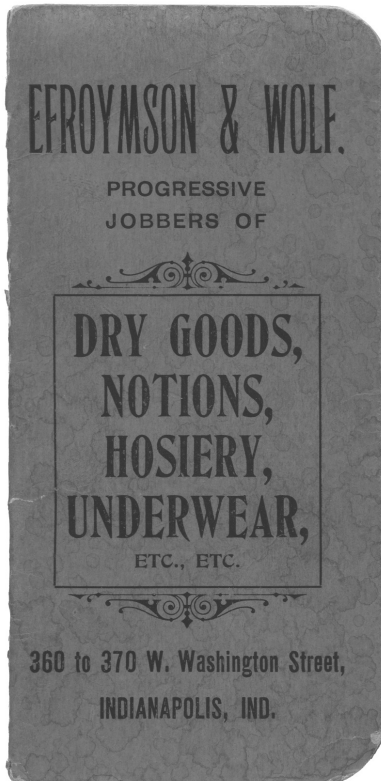
REAL SILK

Shop-at-Home

SERVICE

An advertisement for Realsilk Hosiery Mills, Inc., which the Efroymsen family purchased after the Great Depression.

Perhaps more than any other neighborhood employer, the Columbia Conserve Company seems to have always kept the welfare of its employees at heart. Founded in 1903 by William Powers Hapgood, the company canned soups and other nonperishable goods until 1953. The company existed as a pioneer when it came to the level of care they offered to their workers. For example, the Columbia Conserve Company offered all of its employees three weeks of paid vacation per year; educational programming; retirement and disability pensions; and free health care, including visits to optometrists and dentists. Furthermore, most of these programs did not stop with the employees themselves. Indeed, the company also offered some of these benefits to dependents—spouses, children, etc.—of such workers as well.



Gustave, the eldest of the five Efroymson children, a prominent southside family, went into business with his brother-in-law to establish the dry goods store, Efroymson & Wolf. The Efroymsons also owned a department store on the near Southside.

The Columbia Conserve Company went even further than offering its employees benefits. In truly progressive fashion, it offered them a *voice* in the oversight and decision-making of the business. William Powers Hapgood introduced a system of “workplace democracy” to his company. Under this management structure, the employees voted ten of their co-workers onto the Worker’s Council. This democratic body made decisions on nearly all company-related matters, including the selection of management, the amount of hours employees would work, the disciplining of employees, the termination of jobs, and the salary of each employee. All such decisions were made after rigorous open debate in a democratic manner.

In addition to the Worker’s Council, the model of “workplace democracy” at the Columbia Conserve Company included a profit-sharing plan as well as a stock-purchase plan. The former helped keep productivity

up, while the latter helped the employees gain ownership and legal power over the company. At the height of the stock-purchase plan, the company's workers owned 63% of the common stock.

The Great Depression posed serious challenges to such a progressive model of corporate administration. Employees suffered significant pay cuts, which ultimately led to a strike and subsequent lawsuit by the employees to gain control of the company. The Marion County Superior Court ruled in favor of the company and ordered the trust dissolved, thus offering the *coup de grace* for their experiment in workplace democracy. In 1953, John Sexton and Company of Chicago purchased Columbia Conserve Company. Although the model ultimately failed, workplace democracy found itself way ahead of the curve of labor standards in the early 20th century, particularly when compared to the hard battles being fought by unions for humane treatment and reasonable standards at that time. Despite the unsuccessful end to the story, it serves as yet another example of a Southside employer caring for its workforce during an era that commoditized and devalued labor.

Childhood Earnings: Off the Books and Under the Table

In addition to established modes of employment on the Southside, many of the community's children engaged in various informal economic practices—that is, “off the books” or “under the table” ventures.

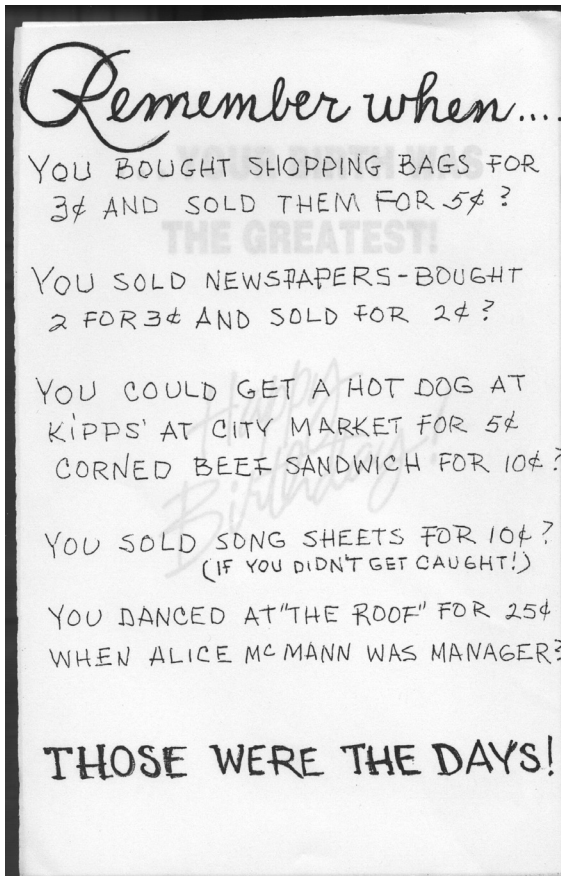
One such moneymaking endeavor found the local children selling scrap metal to local junkyards. Robert Murff remembered such practices: “Another thing that the businesses would let us kids do would be to collect scrap metal, and we could take it to the junkyard and they would buy the metal.” As Mr. Murff mentioned, much of the metal came from local businesses. Additionally, the children would simply scrounge for metal lying around the neighborhood. Finally, the junkyards would also buy bones, rags, magazines, and newspapers, so children would also collect these types of items and sell them as well.

In addition to the junkyards, many of the younger neighborhood children would make money by selling shopping bags outside of department stores. This activity was particularly popular during heavy shopping seasons like Christmas. Esther Calderon recalled such “off the books” work:

"We would pay like three cents for a bag and sell it for five, so we could make a profit. We would be downtown in front of shopping stores, particularly at Christmas time, and the people would come out with all their gifts."

Leon Mordoh had similar memories of such work:

"Well there was a place called Buyer's Paper, and it was on McCarty Street.[...] We'd buy shopping bags from them during Christmas time. At L.S. Ayers there was an alley between the two stores, the main store and then the men's store was to the south. And we'd stand on either end of the doors selling shopping bags."



Sylvia Nahmias Cohen's reminiscences about how children earned money back in the "olden days."

According to Sidney Eskenazi, the children of the neighborhood did not limit their merchandise to shopping bags alone:

"No matter how cold it was at Christmas, [the neighborhood kids] were all downtown with as many coats and hats and boots on that they had. And they're out there on the street selling song sheets, shopping bags, newspapers. They did whatever they had to do to help bring some pennies into the family."

As Mr. Eskenazi stated, the children did not spend their income. Instead, it went to their

families, which often struggled to make ends meet. Esther Calderon said, “We would make a fair amount of money, so we would take it home to our parents because they could use it and they needed it.”

Engaging in such informal business practices did not come without a certain degree of risk. Because such hucksterism was illegal, police officers frequently impinged upon the children’s entrepreneurialism. Many of the community residents remember such encounters with law enforcement. Esther Calderon said, “If a policeman spotted you, he would take you downtown and have you booked. I was never caught.”

Saddelle Ray’s childhood run-in with the police scared her away from selling shopping bags ever again:

“That’s why I only went one time [to sell shopping bags]. I was scared. The policeman chased me right down the alley. My cousin Stanley grabbed me around the corner and shoved me in a door, and that’s why I didn’t get arrested. I was so scared.”

Pauline Finkton remembered how her brothers used to find themselves in such similar situations:

“They said they used to get in trouble. The police would come. I didn’t know if they had Christmas designs on them or what, but my brothers would have to stand outside. I’d have to wipe my nose, and once I said, “I’m cold, and I want to go home.” My brothers would say “no” or “find your way home.” I got home and my mother had a fit.”

Whenever the local children got into trouble with the authorities, Grace Levy [mother of William Levy] often came to the rescue. Esther Calderon and Saddelle Ray recalled how Grace would get them out of trouble:

Esther Calderon: “Grace Levy would go down to the police station and claim anybody who was there and tell them they were her children.”

Saddelle Ray: “She would say, “Come on, come with your sisters,” and pretend we were all her kids so we could get out.”

These types of informal economic practices were typically the province of younger children. As children grew into their teenage years, they began to get more legitimate jobs as a means of making money to help support their

families. Gerald Kraft explained some of these transitory jobs that teenagers could do:

“When we were teenagers,[...]our biggest opportunity was selling shoes in shoe stores, especially over the weekends. But most of the help—for example in our bakery: When I was old enough and the kids that I went to grade school with were old enough, we had to slice the hamburger buns and slice the hot dog buns, and that was done by hand. You literally had a chute and you would take two buns and put it in the chute and it would fall out on the table, and you would take the buns and put them in a box. Every afternoon from public school, about six of my kids would come to the bakery every afternoon and we would slice the buns. We were 10-11 years old, but that’s how my buddies got a little extra money from the bakery.”

In fact, Mr. Kraft does not recall earning much money to speak of before his teenage years:

“But I really have to tell you: Other than the grocery bags, newspapers if there was a special edition—for example when Franklin Roosevelt died, all of us that were there ran downtown and got newspapers and fanned out. Grocery bags at union station. You were able to do that, but it was sporadic. You really wouldn’t be able to say it was employment from the standpoint of earning anything. It was really to pick up some change.”

Don Stillerman, whose family worked in the business of bottling drinks, remembered working as a young teenager:

“I used to work at the bottling plant. I was 11 or 12. I didn’t get paid—labor law you know. I sometimes answered the phone, [took] an order. I would get [a] hand cart and carted up the cardboard boxes up to where they put the drinks into these cartons. I didn’t do any physical labor because I could get hurt. My work was very infrequent. I came whenever I felt like coming. I wasn’t expected there everyday.”

John “Mancy” Calloway also described the types of jobs available to teenagers:

“Everybody back then would come from around to go to Shapiro’s. We didn’t have money to go when we were kids, but [we] would go once we got older. I worked at a shoe shop near Shapiro’s. On the cor-

ner of McCarty Street there was a drug store. There was a barbershop, Shapiro's, and the shoe shop that I worked at shining shoes. But I couldn't stand still long enough to stay there. That was my job then [around age 12]. All of us had some job such as carrying papers."

Regardless of how lucrative such youth "employment" actually was, the stories illustrate the economic hardship faced by southside families as well as the ways in which the residents of the neighborhood—including children—pulled together to overcome such hardships.

Conclusion

The Southside was made up of working-class people. Therefore, employment practices in the neighborhood retain a special significance in the history of the community. From working for multinational corporations like Eli Lilly & Company, to hawking shopping bags in the alleys behind department stores, the southside population worked in a wide variety of jobs and industries. As with most aspects of the neighborhood, the construction of highway I-70 served as the death knell for many local businesses, as did the increasing preference for suburban-style malls. While some of the larger companies had the clout and strength to withstand the change, many of the smaller mom-and-pop shops simply could not. As more and more businesses disappeared from the Southside, so too did the jobs they provided. Nevertheless, employment practices on the Southside offer another window through which to view the character and nature of the community at large.



Members of the Indiana Black Firefighters Association pose in front of Fire Station 1 in 1926. Photo courtesy of the Harold Brown Adkinson Fire Photo Collection at the Indiana State Library.

CHAPTER 7

“We Loved to Play on the Jukebox”

Musical Traditions

By David Plasterer and Anne Waxingmoon

Music is arguably the single most transcendent function of human culture. Throughout the ages, music has served as emotional salve in times of trouble, and it has offered witness and support to moments of joy and celebration. Music and culture reflect, reproduce, and give way to each other. It is hard to separate human culture from musical innovation, performance, and enjoyment. This is affirmed by the research done into the music represented on the old Southside of Indianapolis.



Jewish girls, including Henrietta Schwartz Mervis, dancing outside in folk aprons.

General appreciation of music was a salient feature of life on the Southside. From secular to religious, everyone in the neighborhood appreciated music in some way. Everyone enjoyed listening to music, and many individuals played or sang in various capacities. Many interesting anecdotal stories of music exist from this neighborhood, as well as evidence of a broad cultural respect for and desire to produce music.

Manual Training High School placed a high value on providing quality music instruction for students. During the school orchestra's fledgling years, there were few student musicians. The administration considered the growth of the orchestra to be a priority, so they supported it actively. The school allocated funds to finance collaboration with accomplished musicians from outside the school. These musicians played along with the students while the orchestra became self-sufficient. Manual High School had maintained and expanded its orchestra program since 1896. The first Manual High School Chorus began in 1900, when the school gathered all of the students together to sing. As the program evolved, the most talented singers were enrolled in a new program. These students were combined with select students from Shortridge High School to form the "Wilkinson Opera Company," named after Mrs. Wilkinson, who led the group. The group was appreciated beyond Manual High School, and it played a role in Indianapolis history. The Company sang a debut of "The Pirates of Penzance" and "Iolanthe" at English's Opera House. They sang at the laying of the cornerstone of the library at St. Clair and Meridian Streets. The group also participated in a particularly patriotic event, singing at the reception of the iconic Liberty Bell as it passed through Indianapolis on a nationwide tour in 1915. The choir and orchestra's origins at Manual High School are rich with history and indicate a local appreciation for the performing arts.

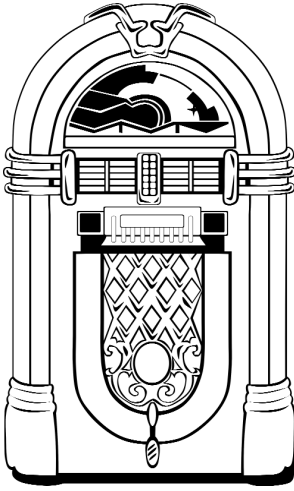
In addition to Manual's efforts to promote musicianship among students, the school also hosted a young man who went on to become one of the country's most influential jazz musicians. Although he was born in Bloomington, Hoagie Carmichael attended Manual High School for a year and a half after his family moved to Indianapolis. Carmichael appreciated certain technical courses at the school, but he never made close personal friendships there and became homesick. He decided to return to Bloomington, so he worked on the construction of Union Station in order to earn money for the return trip (Carmichael, 1965).



Both Manual and Wood high schools emphasized the importance of music. Here, the Wood Marching Band poses for a photo in 1960.

Perhaps the most revealing musical stories are the personal memories that residents eagerly shared during interviews. Former resident Kim Mayfield's experience of local friendships and community centers is deeply intertwined with music. He told a student interviewer about his life in the neighborhood through the lens of contemporary music:

"The year was 1965. I would have been roughly 9 or 10 years old. I say that because this is the story I always thought about the Southside. The year is 1965. The nation was dancing to the sound of Motown, Detroit City; hit the sound of young America. The nation was dancing, right. The Beatles had hit the U.S. two years prior in 1963, but they brought such an impact on music that the American culture, style, fashion, they changed everything. You might ask what this had to do with the Southside... Well, it had to do with the Southside because of our Rec Center at Mayer Chapel on Norwood. That jukebox had all the hit records and we loved to play on the jukebox."



Kim Mayfield is one of many residents with fond memories of recorded music. Former resident Terry (Hazen) Ward also wistfully recalled the role of music in her southside childhood:

“We’d get those 78s out, and we’d jitter-bug... Frankie Laine, Frank Sinatra. Oh my goodness, I *still* love music dearly! Most of the stuff today, you don’t remember it a month later when the next one replaces it. It’s not real music to me, but the old stuff was really quality. You always knew what to do to dance to it: It was always the foxtrot, or the jitterbug...”

Love of music appears in different ways throughout the history of the Southside. In addition to listeners, there were performers and innovators. A prominent example is Leonard A. Strauss. Strauss worked at Kahn Tailoring for 32 years, the last two of which were as vice president of the company. This industrious man was also a passionate violinist with excellent organizational skills. He helped found the Indianapolis Symphony in 1930. Impressively, he also founded the International Amateur Chamber Music Players (IACMP). Strauss began this group by writing 15 letters to acquaintances with the intention of connecting people around the world. When Strauss retired from Kahn Tailoring in 1952, the IACMP had more than 4,000 members.

These stories provide many examples of individual and institutional practices of music on the Southside. Also relevant are the broader stories of two groups of people that were studied most extensively in this project. Their respective histories of music offer a greater understanding of their experiences as immigrants and neighbors. An ethnomusicological perspective adds depth to our study of the African-American and Sephardic populations in the Neighborhood of Saturdays.

Sephardic Music

The music of the Sephardim has a long and unique history. As a people, the Sephardim were expelled from Spain during the Spanish Inquisition and migrated to various countries in the Balkan/Mediterranean region. The music



"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands." The South Calvary Men's choir sings at a special interfaith service attended by many Jewish southsiders.

of the Sephardim reflects this migration by incorporating both Spanish and Middle Eastern musical styles. Most Sephardic music is sung in Ladino, a Judeo-Spanish language, and uses Spanish style guitars. However, there is also a large Turkish influence in Sephardic music, which emerges through the use of dumbeks, tambourines, and violins. Additionally, many Sephardic songs utilize the very unique tonal and scale qualities of Turkish music, called *makam*. The Sephardim brought this dynamic and unique blend of musical influences with them to Indianapolis in 1906.

Sephardic families during the first half of the 20th century enjoyed music in much the same way that music was enjoyed by families all over: live, on the radio, and on vinyl. Although there were not many live music venues directly in the southside neighborhood, children and adults went to the Indiana Ballroom to hear big band music, see vaudeville shows, and dance the night away. The Oriental Theatre on South Meridian Street was also a location for dancing and music, sometimes even hosting dance competitions. However, those venues only played popular American music genres. How would one hear secular Sephardic music or *romantikas* (love songs)? To hear Sephardic songs sung in Ladino, one would most likely sing *a cappella* with friends or listen to records. Popular artists such as Haim Effendi, Flory Jagoda, Carolyn Hester,

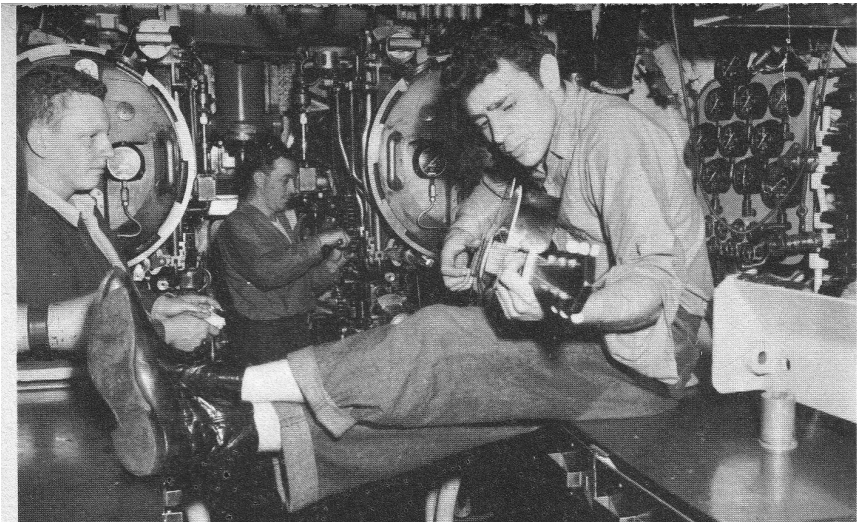
and Gloria Levy had many recordings that were being played in Sephardic homes during that time.

Leon Mordoh, a former southside resident, recalls listening to Sephardic music on record: “I can remember my parents inviting people over and they would play Turkish music, and they would drink Turkish coffee in these little demitasse cups—stronger [coffee]. You could stick a fork in there, it’d stand up.” When there were no records around or the right situation would arise, people would sing Sephardic tunes with one another.

William Levy fondly remembers singing with other children in the neighborhood:

“I remember nights in the summertime... people would be on the porch, and we’d be singing songs. The Cohen family across the street from us, they had a big porch and some girls, and they would harmonize... There was a lot of music out there; had a lot of good singers, too, I think.”

Levy also recalls singing a lot with other Sephardic people from the neighborhood. Besides just singing in the streets and on people’s porches, during the summertime most of the kids in the neighborhood would head to Big Eagle camp on the west side of town.

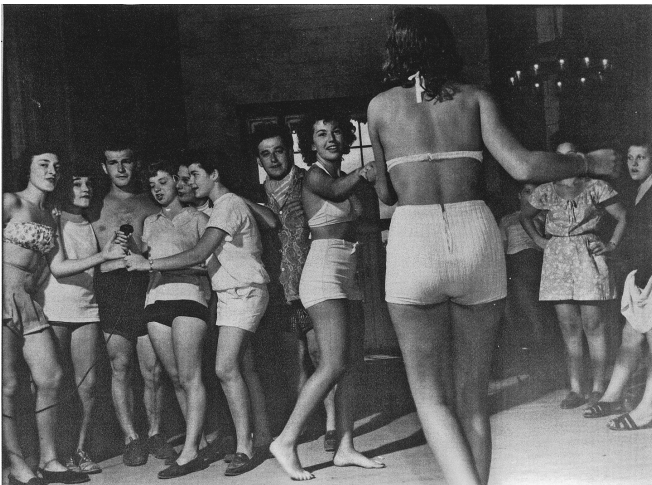


William Levy entertains his shipmates aboard a submarine during World War II.

This was a yearly tradition and one that was accompanied by some great music. Levy reminisced, “Every summer we used to be able to go to camp and they had music there. Around the fireplace and just singing, that’s where our music was.” Whether going to live shows, dancing, singing together, or listening to records, music was all around the Southside.

Another place where people would hear songs in Ladino was at the Etz Chaim *kahal* (synagogue). In the Sephardic tradition there is no instrumentation played in the *kahal*. However, there are chants that are associated with different parts of the service, such as the presenting of the Torah, that are sung in Ladino. Although some songs are in Ladino in the *kahal*, most of the “songs” are in Hebrew and are lyrically based in scripture. These Hebrew “songs” or “chants” comprise most of the service on the Sabbath. It seems that almost every utterance on Saturday mornings in a *kahal* are melodic, beautiful, based in scripture, and *a cappella*. However, there are certain occasions when accompanied music is played at the *kahal*. For instance, Etz Chaim had a well-known Sephardic singer named Judy Frankel come to perform during the 500th anniversary of the Jewish expulsion from Spain in 1992, and late in 2010 the Yuval Ron Ensemble came to perform for the congregation.

The Sephardim have a rich and diverse musical history. It has been shaped by their many migrations throughout time and serves as a testament to their continued perseverance—religiously, culturally, linguistically, and musically. Although music deals with some of the most important aspects of our lives—religion, love, and politics—it is still at its best when shared amongst friends in good spirits.



Young people dancing at Big Eagle Camp.

African-American Music

During the early part of the 20th century, Jazz and Blues were the hottest forms of music around. Jazz artists like Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Wes Montgomery, and Miles Davis as well as singers like Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, and Nina Simon were ruling the airwaves and performing at theaters all over the United States. Indianapolis was no exception, and in fact has a rich musical history as a result of being a midway point between the American South and the Northern Jazz hubs of Chicago and New York. Indianapolis saw some of the greatest musicians of all time pass through its streets and theaters. As John “Mancy” Calloway said, “Just about every big band you’ve heard of would come through Indianapolis one time or another.”



BETHESDA WOMEN ACAPALLA CHORUS

The beautiful harmony produced by this group is the reality of just a dream of its founder, Mrs. Alma J. Mimms.

This group was installed under the pastership of our beloved Rev. G. M. Mimms.

Members: Mattie Seawood, President; Laura Holloway, Vice-Pres.; Mattie Adams, Sec.; Rosalie Shelton, Devotional Leader; Louise Johnson, Treas.; Alma J. Mimms, Director; Fannie Alexander, Asst. Sec.; Ivory Harris, Membership Chairman; Francis Bass, Program Chairman; Willie Mae Hatcher, Anita Wilburn, Betty Taylor, and Marie Scott.

The women's chorus of Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church.

Although Indianapolis' Southside did not have many venues for live music, residents would often go to Indiana Avenue to catch live shows. Indiana Avenue, now largely vacant of music, was a thriving strip of hot jazz clubs and restaurants that catered mainly to Indianapolis' African-American community. The centerpiece of the street was the Madame Walker Theater. The Walker Theater opened the day after Christmas in 1927 and was built by Madame C.J. Walker, the first African-American woman to be a “self-made” millionaire.

Robert Murff, a former southside resident, remembers the music of Indiana Avenue and the Madame Walker Theater: “We would go down on Indiana Avenue, even as youngsters, and peek into the clubs, and listen to the jazz and the music and the performers. We would go to the Walker Theatre. It was just busy.” Indiana Avenue was an extremely important cultural attraction not just for people of the Southside, but also for the entire African-American community in Indianapolis. If you wanted to hear great live music or dance, it was the place to be.

However, according to Mancy, sometimes acts would be so big that no venue on Indiana Avenue could hold them. He said,

“We didn’t have a big enough hall for some of the bands because a lot of people would be dancing, so they allowed us to go to a place called Thompson Hall. It was right across from the City County building. There was a large hall, and that’s where the big bands would come.”

Even with the lack of places on the Southside to watch live music, residents found plenty of other places to see performances. Fortunately, they lived just a few miles away from one of the premier music avenues in the U.S. at the time.

Another place where African Americans would play or listen to music was at church. South Calvary and Bethesda Baptist were two of the main religious



Members of the Bethesda Baptist Church women’s chorus
with Reverend L.A.Manuel.

institutions in the neighborhood. Music has always been an integral part of church life for African Americans. The spiritual songs of African Americans sowed the seeds for subsequent blues and jazz music. South Calvary started a choir as soon as they opened the doors of the church in 1875. A congregation-generated history tells of organist Miss Mae Salisbury, who played there in the early 1900's. Since that time, many church choirs have sung their praises in churches on the Southside.

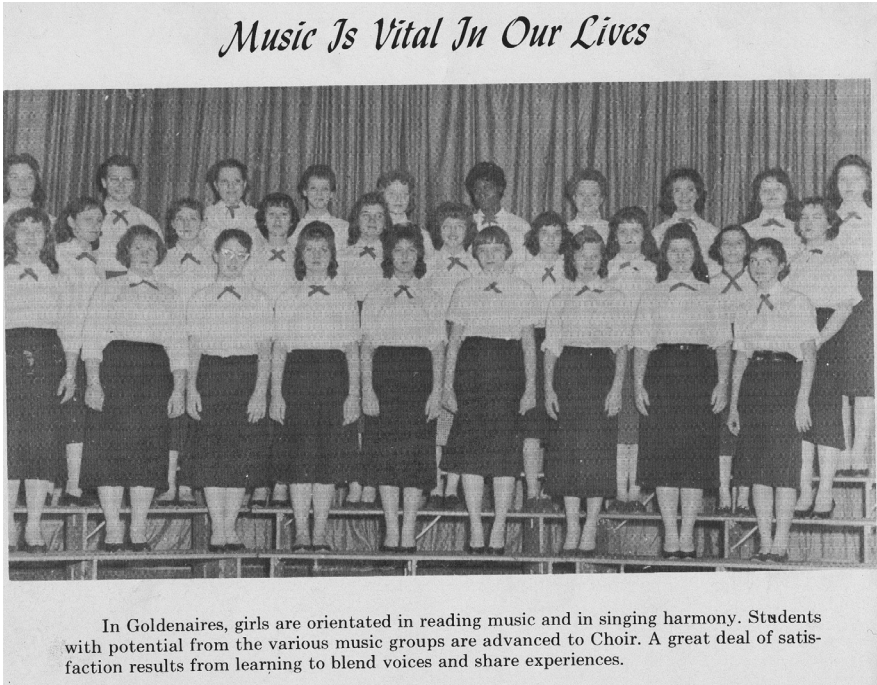
In addition to live shows and church, people sang as they always have with friends and family, listened to records, or tuned into the radio to hear music. John "Mancy" Calloway told us in an interview that he always loved music: "Where I was brought up everybody would sing and dance on the Southside. Now I don't play anything but the radio, but music we love. We always bought the records." Mancy also loves to dance: "I love music. I started dancing when I was 12. Everyone around me was dancing. I went to a place called Christamore House off of Colombia and they would say, 'You are too young, but if you give us 15 cents you can watch.'"

African-American music has led the way in innovation over the last hundred years. Jazz and blues are two of the most unique styles of music worldwide and are replicated by people of different musical traditions the world over. Indianapolis has an incredibly rich jazz history, with people like Wes Montgomery, Hoagy Carmichael, and "Slide" Hampton all hailing from or living in the Indianapolis area over the years. The communities of the Southside have been able to participate in and enjoy this musical history for many generations. Fond memories of big band concerts and big name singers on Indiana Avenue fill the memories of many southside residents, past and present. Also recalled are the memories of singing and dancing with one another, whether in church, at home, or anywhere it seemed appropriate. The Southside really was a musical place.

Conclusion

The Southside represents diversity, tolerance, and creativity. These stories of music contextualize the struggles and successes that took place in the neighborhood from its inception. While we have included parallel analyses of African-American and Sephardic musical styles, it is important to note that the galvanizing effect of musical appreciation transcends the historical differences

of the two communities. Just as residents aspired to enjoy healthy families, good neighborly relations, and joyful recreation, they all used music as a tool in these endeavors. The music of the Southside punctuated and clarified the high and low points of life in the area. Furthermore, the hallmark blurring of racial boundaries in the neighborhood is affirmed by the universality of music in general. The power of music, to capture moments and eras, is often understood when words fail. The crossovers between genres, such as Bill Levy playing Hillbilly music, or Hoagy Carmichael writing "Georgia on My Mind," clearly exhibits the permeability of social boundaries with regard to race, age, and class in music.



The girls' chorus of Wood High School in 1960, the Goldenaires.

CHAPTER 8

“We Have a Special Feeling For the Dead”

Death and Mourning

By Anne Waxingmoon

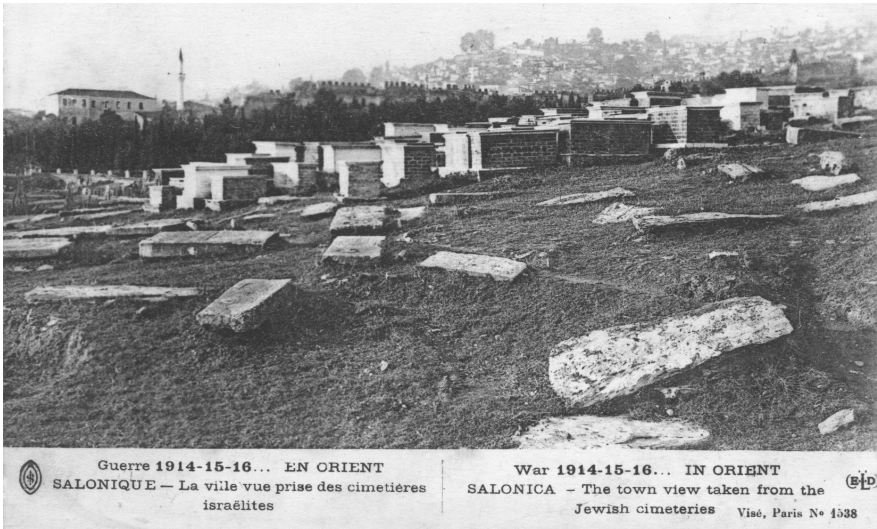
Introduction

At first thought, many folks would rather skip over reading a chapter on death and bereavement practices among southside neighborhood residents. Talking and reading about death can bring out painful memories of loss. Sometimes, even thinking about death brings an unwelcome reminder of our own mortality. However, death exists as a “human universal,” meaning that each of us will eventually face our own deaths. Furthermore, few people make it through life without experiencing the loss of many beloved family and community members. Whoever you are, and wherever your ancestors came through, death is part of your inheritance.

It is easy to take death traditions for granted, or to see them as somehow unremarkable. When asked if he would participate in an interview, John “Mancy” Calloway paused, raised an eyebrow, and said, “What don’t we know about this already?” Nevertheless, interviews with former southside residents revealed that death and bereavement practices are complex and make up a significant portion of the history of the neighborhood. Death rituals unquestionably mark ethnic identity distinctly for both African Americans and Jews, respectively. Still, there are overlapping themes, such as social support for the bereaved and rituals that show respect for the body of the deceased. Such overlapping values and practices affirm that sometimes, our differences pale in

comparison to our similarities. When a southside resident died, there was a thriving culture waiting to care for their body and protect the grief of survivors. In a comparative analysis of western mortuary variation, scholar Tony Walter outlines three categorical controllers of burial/cremation: Municipal, Commercial, and Religious. None of these categories are fully compartmentalized in any modern nations. However, when it comes to southside burials, religion played a particularly strong role for both the Jewish and African-American communities.

Burial Practices and Community Support



A view of Salonika, Greece, taken from the old Jewish cemetery.

When an immigrant population settles in a new home, the need for a place to inter their dead promptly becomes apparent. For Jewish people, this means a Jewish cemetery. Separate burial is an important ethnic marker by religious standards. A Jewish burial plot must meet three criteria to be appropriate, according to Maurice Lamm, author of “The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning”:

1. *The purchase contract should stipulate that the area of the plot is designed exclusively for Jews.*
2. *Burial rights must be permanent. The cemetery corporation should not be permitted to exercise any authority with regard to the removal of the remains from any grave.*

3. *All facilities for Jew and non-Jew must be absolutely separate—with separate entrance gates and with each section fenced completely.*

With this information in mind, it is easy to understand why the Etz Chaim congregation quickly purchased a cemetery on the Southside. Their current website states:

“With the help of Rabbi M. Feuerlicht and the I.H.C. (Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation), the cemetery on Kelly Street was purchased in 1916... The first burial in the Etz Chaim Cemetery was that of a young boy, Samuel Pardo, in 1923.”

Congregants of Etz Chaim take a great deal of pride in their cemetery. Scott Nahmias said:

“We keep our own graveyard. Now, we do have people that cut the grass. But we do the painting and the curbing, and we clean the fence. Jack Cohen does that, and he does a wonderful job. It just always looks good! There’s not a lot of Sephardic synagogues. We’re very proud of what we’ve done.”



The entrance to the Etz Chaim Sephardic cemetery located on the far Southside of Indianapolis.

Judge William Levy echoed similar sentiments: “We have a special feeling for the dead. Maybe it’s not unique. But when you see the way some other cemeteries are maintained, some people aren’t as actively involved. I can’t account for that.”


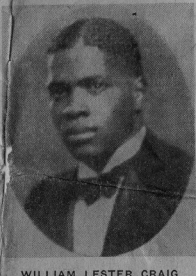
African-American residents of the neighborhood do not have a formal religious sanction on where they are buried, but they have an equally significant history regarding death and burial. Craig Funeral Home is of great importance to the history of the Southside and the

broader history of Indianapolis. The establishment opened in 1936 as the first “colored” funeral service parlor on the Southside. Brothers William Lester and Joseph raised their families living above the funeral home. In the meantime, they built a reputation for offering the highest quality of care for the dead. When the state took over the Craig Brothers establishment through eminent domain to build I-70, the family took the business to 34th and College Avenue. While the original Craig brothers have long since passed, the family has continued running the business.

THE INDIANAPOLIS RECORDER

CRAIG BROTHERS TO OPEN FIRST MODERN FUNERAL HOME ON SOUTHSIDE

Impressive Ceremonies To Mark Opening of Beautiful
New Building Sunday Afternoon; Proprietors
Have Fine Record of Training, Experience

JOSEPH CRAIG

WILLIAM LESTER CRAIG

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1936

Everything is in readiness for the opening of the city's latest and completely equipped funeral home. Free souvenirs will be given away between the hours of 1 and 7 p. m. Sunday, January 26, when the reception celebrating the opening of the Southside Funeral Home will be held.

located at 1002 South Senate avenue, corner of Ray street, is operated by two brothers, William Lester and Joseph Craig. Theirs is the first modernly equipped plant operated by colored people south of Washington street.

Conveniently located, the building contains twelve beautifully appointed rooms, including glimmer room, chapel and preparation room. The last is adequately equipped with all latest instruments and materials necessary for the rendering of efficient and satisfactory service.

William Craig is a graduate of the Indiana College of Embalming, a school of the highest grade. He has had more than five years' practical experience in the business, having been employed by the Lucas R. Willis Funeral Home and the Peoples Burial company. With his brother, he was born and reared in Connersville, Ind., and is a graduate of the high school there. He is married and a member of the South Calvary Baptist church.

The younger brother, and co-owner and manager, Joseph, is also a graduate of the Connersville high school and the Indiana College of Embalming. He also is married and a member of the Mt. Olive Baptist church. Both are licensed embalmers and funeral directors.

The new funeral directors, well trained in the art of giving efficient, courteous service, have surrounded themselves with an efficient staff which they are confident will enable them to offer complete service at a very moderate cost.

The public is invited to attend the opening reception Sunday. The viatic for day or night service is Dr. 0813.

Though the southside colored population of the city is quite large and has shown steady growth over the years, only minor efforts have been made heretofore to corral the business among that group, which has been given nearly one hundred per cent to white funeral directors.

After an initial period required to launch the business here successfully, the Craig brothers will open a branch at their home, in Connersville, they have announced.

An article from a January 1936 issue of the *Indianapolis Recorder* celebrating the opening of the original Craig Funeral Home.

William Craig, the son of William Lester Craig, now runs the business. Mr. Craig states that the home today serves clients by appointment only. In 2011, Craig Funeral Home served eighty clients. This is impressive, especially considering that Craig Funeral Home currently operates by word-of-mouth and does not invest in advertisements. Mr. Craig stated, “I would say 75% of our business here is from that southside base. They are very loyal.”



The original Craig Funeral Home located at 1002 S. Senate.

Craig Funeral Home is as much a cultural backdrop of southside history as it is a modern local business. Beverle Kane refers to the business simply as “Craig’s,” and she sounds as if she could be talking about her own backyard:

“Even now, as time goes on...

With the interstate thirty-five years ago, we still come to Craig’s. We’re still on that front porch, but it’s not as dense as it used to be... I mean, that whole porch would just be packed, down the stairs. It’d take you fifteen minutes just to get inside and through all the people.”

The crowding that Beverle describes shows us what an important social function wakes and funerals play to this day.

It is important to note that comparisons of the two groups’ funeral traditions are generalized. While traditions are important to both communities, there is as much change and variation in death as there is in life. However, we can learn about both groups through their stories and memories. A notable difference between African-American and Jewish burials is the viewing—or lack thereof—of the body. However, the loving, deliberate care given to the deceased prior to burial marks a shared priority of the two groups.

Frequently, African-American funerals have a calling the night before a funeral or on the same day. Friends and relatives have an opportunity to see the deceased’s body one last time. Not all visitors go to see the deceased at an open-casket calling, but for those who want to say goodbye in this manner, it can serve as a step toward closure. Callings on the old Southside often took place in the home of the deceased. Mr. Craig said, “We used to have drapes to make a backdrop. And then you would take the deceased to the church to have the funeral.” Today, this is exceedingly rare. In his business, Mr. Craig states

that embalming is not required, but nor is it eschewed. Rather, it is sometimes mandated for public health reasons, and other times to preserve the body if several days pass between death and a calling or funeral.

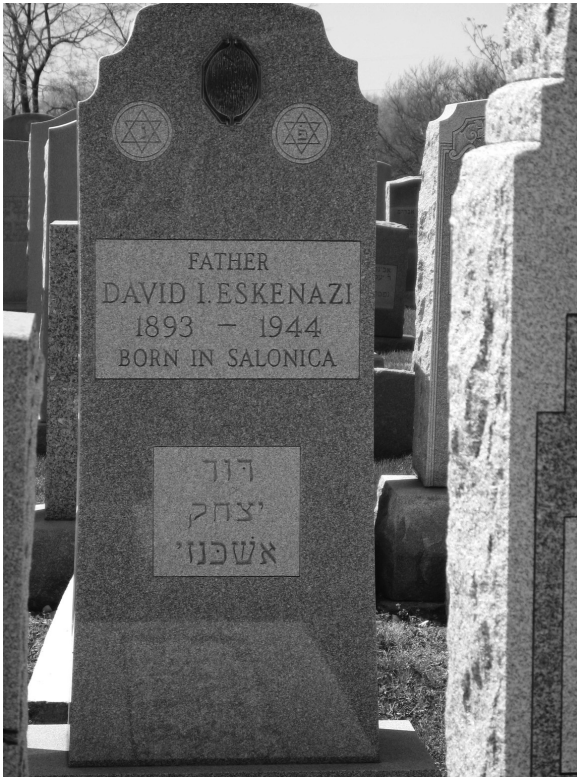


Racecar driver Charlie Wiggins, also known as the “Negro Speed King,” and his wife Roberta’s gravestone at Crown Hill cemetery. For a long time, their grave was unmarked until a film and book about Wiggins came out in 2002. Donors then raised money for this gravestone in 2003.

Jewish burials do not involve a viewing component outside of the immediate family. Burials happen as promptly as possible and are facilitated by the Jewish burial society. In Yiddish, the society is known as *Hevra Kaddisha*, but Sephardic Jews call their burial society the *Rochessim*. The women’s segment is called the *Rochesses*. The society provides ritual prayers, washes the body of the deceased, and dresses the body before the funeral home takes over. Jewish culture does not embalm except in cases with an express public health concern. The casket is often a simple pine box. While the phrase “green burial” did not come up in interviews, it would be easy for an outsider make a connection to such practices.

Currently, Scott Nahmias and Judge Levy are two of the members of the Sephardic burial society. Judge Levy inherited a key role in the *Rochessim* from his own father, Isaac, before the latter passed away. At present, Levy has assisted in approximately fifty burials. He said,

“I have a unique burial obligation that, when we take the casket to the cemetery, I open the casket and I put sand in their eyes and I touch their forehead, and shut the casket. I’m the last person to touch them. It’s a special job.”



Gravestone of Sidney Eskenazi's father David, who was born in Salonika, Greece, at the southside Jewish cemetery.

Scott Nahmias takes pride in the work for reasons that—at least in part—transcend his own Sephardic identity. He said, “[It’s] not because I’m Jewish, but there’s just some things that seem like the right thing to do, as a person.” Both Levy and Nahmias see burial society work as a special honor, a *mitzvah*, and would assist any burial that they possibly could. Nahmias stated, “The only time I missed is when I was hospitalized, and I probably still would have done it, but I just couldn’t stand up!”

Both the African-American and Jewish communities also provide social support for the bereaved. While the details of the support are different on the surface, the essence is the same: each community provides for its members the best that it can, even when resources are scarce. This is something that makes these two groups special, even beyond their connections as southside neighbors. For example, Beverle Kane recalled:

“People like neighbors will stay at a person’s house while they’re at the funeral or the cemetery. Because people are usually bringing food. Plus, years ago, they used to put your address in the paper. So, of course, while you’re at the funeral, things could happen. So you’d always have a neighbor, cousin, friend, or co-worker stay at the house.”

While this is a different role than burial work in the *Rochessim*, there is something of an overlap with regard to interpersonal charity and mutual support in times of need. While Jewish traditions have formalized periods of mourning known as *shiva* and *sheloshim*, African-American traditions are more likely to have a comparatively longer calling and funeral. In both groups, the details of ethnic identity are different, but the motivations are the same. Both groups feed and keep house for the bereaved. Both groups visit their dead in local cemeteries. Both groups lean on their religious faith to make sense of their losses. From an anthropological perspective, the customs surrounding death and bereavement make residents of the Neighborhood of Saturdays look very much different, yet simultaneously very much the same.



William Craig with his sister, Ellen "Janie" Craig Johnson. Craig Funeral Home is still in operation, now located at 34th and College.

CHAPTER 9

“Why Did They Choose My Community?”

The Construction of I-70 and the Breakup of the Old Neighborhood
By Lindsay Schaiper

Introduction

This is the story of a community, the Southside community of downtown Indianapolis, or better known to many since the 1970's as the Babe Denny neighborhood. Babe Denny was not always known by that name, but through the bonds that hold the community together, a network of families and friends continue to meet yearly in the neighborhood park from which the community takes its name. Babe Denny, like multiple communities across this country, has seen its fair share of hard times. But through it all, people from the neighborhood have retained close ties. This chapter focuses in particular on the upheaval that was created when Interstate 70 cut through the neighborhood's landscape, destroying many of the community's businesses and homes, but not the bonds that continued to connect residents and former residents to one another.

After World War II the American government enacted several pieces of legislation that drew people from urban areas to the suburbs, and that also served to connect this nation through systems of communication and transportation. Through a series of initiatives aimed at connecting America's communities and commuters, the federal highway system was born. Although the acts that laid the foundation for these roads across America can be seen as “progressive” in nature, it would be a mistake to overlook the human cost of

such renewal. What follows is an attempt to share the story of just one community affected by interstate development.

During the course of 2010 and 2011, while working on the Neighborhood of Saturdays project, it became ever apparent that the construction of Interstate 70 in the late sixties and early seventies had torn the neighborhood apart and shaped the future layout and relationship of this community to the city at large. Such issues quickly became the focus of this chapter, and we have since set about collecting stories and information in regard to urban renewal programs and the communities they often displace. Through the real-life stories of the many individuals kind enough to share their experience with us, a human face can be put on the story of displacement, as experienced by hundreds of community's nationwide and more locally, right here in Indianapolis.



A view of the I-70 entrance from the roof of the N.K. Hurst Bean Company.

Background

Before diving into the history of urban renewal, its policies, and how it has shaped neighborhoods nationwide, we hope to present the story of this

neighborhood's experience as it was told to us. Throughout the course of this research, we have been drawn back in time to an era when vegetable peddlers walked the streets of Indianapolis selling fresh produce, a time when the neighborhood parks and local community centers served as a means of drawing the community together and establishing an investment in the well-being of one's family and one's neighbors.

As immigration has always been a significant slice of the American story, so has it been a strong aspect of the near southside community. Throughout its history, the Southside has always been composed of many ethnic groups, who have traveled from both within and outside the United States to arrive in the area we studied. According to a report by Maude Louvenbruck titled "The Near Southside: As It Was and As It Is," Babe Denny has been home to many other ethnic communities including Irish, German, Jewish, Appalachian, and African-American immigrants since the nineteenth century. While the focus of my research is mainly related to interactions amongst the Southside's African-American and Jewish residents, it is still important to detail the others who have also shaped the community and influenced its surroundings.

Tumultuous times in Europe brought waves of immigrants to the United States throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Settling on the near Southside of Indianapolis during this time were both Irish and German immigrants who came seeking employment. Many worked on both the railroads and the canal in Indianapolis. The Irish influx soon settled in an area known as "Irish Hill," located south between Delaware and Shelby Streets. Others settled along South Missouri and South West Streets. Those German immigrants arriving in Indianapolis soon surpassed in numbers the Irish on the Southside. In the 19th century, the Midwest became the main residence for many German immigrants, who wanted to avoid the crowded conditions in the eastern United States and competition with slave labor in the South. German immigrants originally settled just south of the city. However, as generations of German immigrants became fluent in English and assimilated into American culture, their numbers dispersed throughout the city and state.

Also settling on the Southside were migrants from the hills of Tennessee and Kentucky who included coal and timber miners. As these industries hit harder times, these migrants began settling further north and establishing residences in Indianapolis. The Appalachian community on the Southside of Indianapolis is described as being hard-working, independent, and self-reliant. However, they were mostly illiterate and had a hard time adjusting to the confines



Sergeant Kim Mayfield shares his memories of the disruptions caused by I-70 with students Evan Danner and Lindsay Schaiper at one of the scan-a-thons.

of urban life. Such adjustments caused these people to move from place to place within the city, thus leaving no strong sense of identity in their paths.

While many ethnic communities have played a part in shaping southside history, none have shaped

this particular part of the city more in the past century than the Jewish and African-American populations who arrived from Europe and the Southern United States, respectively. These residents lived alongside each other in the neighborhood, thus creating a strong sense of community rather than allowing the strong ethnic bonds within their communities to tear people apart. The interconnectedness of these two groups has shaped the memories of the residents of this neighborhood. Most of the stories collected for this project reflect the related histories of these two groups, as their shared experience details everything from living spaces, to small businesses, to schools.

The Coming of the Interstate

As the Southside's African-American community seemed to be thriving in the late 1950's and early 1960's—at least communally, if not always financially—heading straight towards the neighborhood was Interstate 70. The highway's eventual construction through the Southside would shake the foundation of this community to its core.

On June 19, 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Federal Highway Act into law, which authorized the construction of the Interstate Highway System and created a pay-as-you-go Trust Fund to generate the Federal Government's share of the cost. Previous legislation had been in place to

encourage the construction of an Interstate Highway system. In fact, as early as 1806, the federal government authorized the federally funded construction of the National Road (or what is now known as U.S. 40). Despite these efforts, it was not until Eisenhower's 1956 plan that the funding came together to support such a large-scale national project. Congressman Hale Boggs of Louisiana proposed the federal highway funding legislation. The proposal included a tax-based system in which highway products such as gasoline and tires would be taxed and the revenues from such taxes placed into a Highway Trust Fund. It was from this fund that money would be taken in order to repay the State governments for any highway projects. Such funding legislation was incorporated into the original 1956 Highway Act and served as a means to boost federal support for the interstate system.

While funding for the Federal-Highway system was in place, little consideration was initially given to the concern of those communities through which the interstates would be built. As Robert E. Reiter, an attorney out of Kansas City, Missouri writes in his article, "The Impact of the Federal Highway Program on Urban Areas,"

"Much of the turmoil over freeways has resulted from the past failure to involve the public during the planning stage. If those directly affected were to be consulted in advance of decisions, much of the opposition could probably be avoided."

Very little time, preparation, and consideration was initially given to those communities through which the interstates were built, even though Federal Law dictates that notice be given to the communities surrounding proposed interstates prior to construction. This is also noted by Reiter when he cites Section 128 of the Federal Highway Act, which states:

"Any state highway department which submits plans for a Federal-Aid Highway Project involving the bypassing of, or going through, any city, town, or village... shall certify... that it has had public hearings or has afforded the opportunity for such hearings, and has considered the economic and social effects of such a location, its impact on the environment, and its consistency with the goals and objectives of such urban planning as has been promulgated by the community..."

A general lack of consideration for this portion of the law is evident in the story of the Southside of Indianapolis. Many residents note both the lack

of notice with regard to the interstate being built and the complete lack of community involvement. As Robert and Anderson Murff, two former Southside residents, noted when asked about Interstate 70,

“There was no warning of that highway coming through. All they did was, when the time came around for them to start, they said this is what we are going to do, and you got to go.”

Similarly, when asked about any notices going up, Miz Pete recalled,

“Well let me say this much... a lot of times, the majority of people couldn't read and write and if you can't read and write how do you know what you are signing? There was nothing different... If it wasn't affecting you then you really didn't know about it. We were down here on the other end so it wasn't affecting us directly... We found out through neighbors, I had two aunties that lived up there. We heard by word of mouth.”

When asked, the majority of southside residents share similar observations, that is, that very little notice was given regarding interstate construction. The neighborhood as a whole was not notified; only the individuals who were going to have to move received any notice. One can only question if such methods of notifying community residents about the construction served as a means to divide potential organizers who may have been planning to petition against highway construction.

As noted in a 1998 report done by Anthropology students at IUPUI, entitled “Ray Street and I-70”,

“The land for the project (Interstate 70) was acquired by using eminent domain. This is where the state takes a property owner's land by force. The property owner is given the appraised value of the land... All land for this part of I-70 was obtained by July 1975, with the completion of the project by October 1976.”

Eminent Domain allows the governing agency to dictate where an interstate will be built by means of forcefully acquiring the land for which the plans are made. Federal law dictates that relocation costs should be provided as well as an appraised value for the land awarded, but these amounts often fall short of the true property value. As noted by Reiter,

“Approval of any federally-funded highway project will be withheld unless the State highway departments provide displaced persons with relocation assistance payments and ‘decent, safe, and sanitary’ replacement housing... The Federal limit on the relocation payment is set at \$5,000 dollars.”

With the funding capped at \$5000, the government clearly could not provide each affected person with adequate compensation.

Furthermore, as noted above, many of the southside residents in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s were renters and occupying living spaces from former Jewish residents who had since moved north. While those who owned property received an appraised offer, those who rented were merely left with notice to leave. As Kim Mayfield, whose family rented housing on the Southside, remembered,

“You’d come to school and say, hey you know we only got like two or three months. If you owned your home they would offer [and negotiations would go] back and forth. If you rented, and we rented, then you just had to get out.”

The funding provided for relocation costs was minimal. As such, it made it all the more difficult to uproot and leave the neighborhood. Even those families provided with property and relocation costs note just how little was actually received. As Terry (Hazen) Ward recalls,

“Everybody took care of their property. It was a well settled neighborhood. Then just, out of the clear blue sky... sold it. They stole it. They said they bought it. They gave us almost nothing for all the property that we had there. They took our livelihood. Whatever we had, they gave us a settlement, which was a steal. They hardly gave us anything.”

Many African-American southside residents moved north, but their move can be traced to all parts of the city. In a community as tightly knit as the Babe Denny neighborhood, moving away could not have been easy. After all, the neighborhood was their home, and moving proved to be a disheartening and overwhelming task. As Kim Mayfield notes,

“What happened was it was pretty sad when the highway came through. You can see it was like a person dying, when your best

friends start moving away. I used to come out of school and see the people putting numbers on the houses. They were going to tear that house down, but your friend lived there. They would tell you that you only had so much time to move. The highway was a sad time because it separated us. I can understand progress, but it kind of hurts because—I'll be 57 next month, and as I drive through different neighborhoods, especially driving through the Southside, I still see these other neighborhoods that are there like Garfield. I think, 'Man, why did they choose my neighborhood?'"



Wherever you stand on the Southside, a highway runs through it...

In considering further effects of interstate construction on the residents of Babe Denny, one must also consider transportation for the residents of the neighborhood. While the interstate system can be hailed as an achievement of transportation that allows for easy travel between rural and urban or suburban areas, it is of little use or importance to the inner city commuter who often lacks the means of transportation to even utilize the highway. As Charles Martin Sevilla, a criminal defense attorney in San Diego, notes in an article titled "Asphalt Through the Model Cities: A Study of Highways and the Urban Poor,"

“To the urban poor, a highway is of little benefit. Assuming he is financially capable of owning an automobile, a poor person often has nowhere to go with it. The highway leads out into the vast stretches of bedroom suburbs which surround the city in doughnut fashion. His job isn’t there, and with barriers of racial and economic discrimination prevalent, neither is his home. Highways simply do not serve the needs of the American poor.”

Many of Babe Denny’s residents did not own cars, as Miz Pete recalls,

“There were four men on our street that had cars. Back then there was the WPA [Works Progress Administration], the workforce that Roosevelt had established. They would pick up these different men and drive them to work. There was no reason for you to have to have a car. My father worked way out so there was no way he was walking. Everything else we just walked.”

Neighborhood residents got from place to place primarily on foot, so an interstate system barreling right through their neighborhood hardly served them at all. When Interstate 70 was constructed through Babe Denny it literally divided the neighborhood in half. In viewing a map of the area, one can see that Interstate 70 was constructed between Ray and Wilkins Streets from east to west, thus dividing the community into north and south boundaries. This left the residents living on the north end of the interstate with no connecting route to get to those living just south. It also severed some access to South Calvary Baptist and Bethesda Baptist churches, two neighborhood pillars connecting residents throughout their displacement. In considering the interstate’s effects on the commute between the north and south sides of the neighborhood, William Craig stated,

“One of the big hang ups was that they had no way for people on the north side of the interstate to get to the south, and vice versa. There were two black churches there. One was Bethesda, which is at 234 W Ray Street, a couple doors from us. There is also South Calvary on Kenwood and Morris. You either had to go clear to Meridian Street or over to West Street. If you know anything about West Street, there were no sidewalks over there.”

It was not until heavy petitioning took place by neighborhood residents that the state finally agreed to place a walkway under the highway to allow



Brenda Burrell Johnson stands in front of one of the houses she lived in on Meikel St. when she was growing up. That house was demolished soon after this photo was taken (2008).

pedestrians access to the other side. When they were interviewed for the 1998 project, both Flora Spurlock, the Community Development organizer for the Concord Community Center, and Pauline Finkton, a neighborhood activist, noted the struggle necessary just to have the walkway added:

Flora Spurlock:
 “We fought it. We marched on it. We marched while the trucks was dumping dirt... we wanted a through street, and that’s what we was fighting for. We got the though street.”¹

Pauline Finkton:
 “They had a march. People didn’t want this to happen. We all signed petitions, but I don’t think it ever made a difference. If they had built houses somewhere else when they tore all that down, then the neighborhood would still be as good as it was, but they didn’t.”

Conclusion: Bonds That Never Break

The residents of the Southside fought to maintain their ties throughout the upheaval created by the construction of I-70. As was true in many other communities in the 1950’s and 1960’s, the suburban or outer city malls began

to replace the neighborhood mom-and-pop businesses. Often, when considering the results that federally funded urban renewal and interstate construction plans have on urban residents, we are quick to assign words such as “blight” and “displacement” to their struggle. When asked if he felt that the word “displacement” justly defined the Southside story, William Craig paused briefly, then answered, “I think that’s kind. When you tell people they just got to get up and move and disrupt the whole neighborhood... that’s a kind way to put it.”

The term “displacement” probably does not do justice to the pain caused by renewal and upheaval. The teary eyes and painful looks cast during interviews out I-70 attest to this fact. There is no word that can describe the injury caused to these people due to the lack of consideration, planning, and community involvement when constructing the interstate through their neighborhood. Who’s to say how history might have resulted for the near Southside of Indianapolis if a little more time and effort had gone into involving local residents in the construction plans for I-70? Rather than utilize such projects as a means to update and revive “blighted” areas, they are often bulldozed over without consideration for the human cost of progress.



Looking at I-70 from Kenwood Street in front of South Calvary. All of the streets in this part of the neighborhood have been cut off by the Interstate.

The residents of Babe Denny, though displaced, have remained resilient. They have met annually for the past 37 years on the first Saturday of August at Babe Denny Park (or Meikel Street Park) to celebrate the bonds that have remained unbroken through their struggle. John “Mancy” Calloway said the following about the yearly picnic:

“[It’s played] a great role in bringing people together. People who left when they were younger they heard about the picnic, and they came down to see some of their old friends. See who was still around. And it was really great. It’s been great ever since.”

No doubt the residents of Babe Denny have had their share of rough times through the construction of I-70 and their resulting upheaval. Despite it all, the residents have remained a community, although scattered in different locations. Babe Denny exemplifies the meaning of community, and its residents express the true significance of what it means to be a neighbor. This chapter has shed light on the importance of sticking together, regardless of circumstance, as southside friendships and personal networks have remained intact throughout its hardships. Their story is both universal and peculiar to Indianapolis. What remains unique is their love for each other, their community, and the bonds that refuse to break despite it all. This is not the story of a neighborhood displaced, but of a community that refused to be divided.



The 2011 Babe Denny annual picnic. Scott Nahmias joins with other southsiders in celebration of the community that lives on.

AFTERWORD

The View from the Indiana Historical Society

By John Herbst, President and CEO, Indiana Historical Society

Who and what we think is important in our national history has certainly changed over time. When I studied American history in high school during the late 1960's, the emphasis was squarely on the role of great men and on key military battles. By the time I majored in history in college, social history was in favor, which used the analysis of data to reflect broad sweeps of our national experience, looking at industrial work, migration and



President and CEO of the Indiana Historical Society John Herbst standing with Rosie Kaplan, whose family's story of relocation from Europe to the Southside was told through an innovative exhibit called, "Making a Jewish Home 1950."

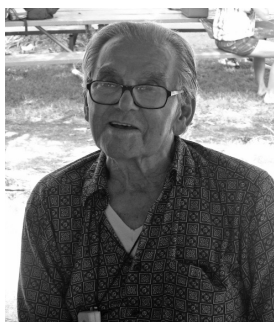
immigration, religion and ethnicity. To these first two approaches, we have seen the addition of community history and the telling of stories by individuals in our own neighborhoods. We like to say at the Indiana Historical Society that ordinary people have extraordinary stories, and it is projects like *The*

Neighborhood of Saturdays which help drill down to the real essence of history by providing a personal “face” on all the demographic data that makes the decisions of major notable figures and the grand sweeps of movements and social processes up close, personal and human. In the details found in this publication about Indianapolis’ near southside neighborhood, we see in the stories of individuals and their families not just the general trends of American history, but the complexities, the shades of gray, and the exceptions to the rules. It reminds us of the great diversity that has accompanied the American experience as well as the shared heritage of identity of those who live in a particular place.

The history of Indianapolis as an urban center is illuminated by this collaborative effort of IUPUI’s Anthropology Department and the community groups representing the past, present, and future of this particular area so close to the city’s center at Monument Circle. Undoubtedly, this area, where I have lived myself for 15 years, will undergo many more transitions, and it is my hope that this study of the neighborhood will be a valuable guide in grounding the future in the fascinating heritage we see unfolded here.

In Memoriam

While we were working on this project, we lost several people who had been active in contributing their time and energy to this project and to their community. We have missed them and wish to pay tribute to them here. May their lives be for a blessing.



Jack "Blackjack"
Alboher



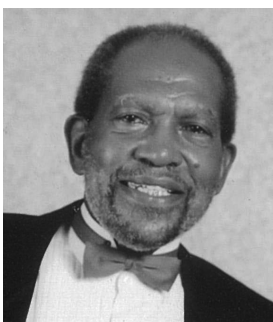
Jessie Clark



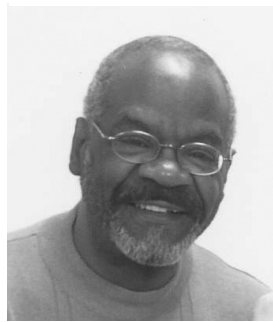
Rosetta Crain



Pauline Finkton



Joseph "Jack" Miller



Anderson "Homer"
Murff



Meyer Nahmias

EPILOGUE

Indianapolis City-County Council Passes Special Resolution in Honor of the “Neighborhood of Saturdays” Project.

On December 17, 2012, City-County Councilor Jeff Miller (District 19) read a proposed resolution in honor of the Neighborhood of Saturdays project, recognizing the spirit of racial and religious cooperation that the project embodied. The resolution was signed by the mayor and was unanimously endorsed by the entire City-County Council and will remain in the permanent record of the City-County Council Proceedings. About 20 Southsiders were present to hear the resolution being read and to receive recognition from the Council and from the public.



City-County Special Resolution No 460 December 17, 2012

A SPECIAL RESOLUTION recognizing the Babe Denny Neighborhood for its contribution to Indianapolis.

WHEREAS, the descendants of Sephardic Jews, originally expelled from Spain during the Inquisition, and resettled in the Ottoman Empire, then immigrating to Indianapolis in the early 20th century, where many worked as tailors in a factory owned by German Jews and others were peddlers or opened shops; and

WHEREAS, the descendants of Africans brought to America as slaves and emancipated years later, made their way to Indianapolis, discovering in the Southside both access to industrial jobs and rare examples of integrated public schools; and

WHEREAS, the African-Americans Christians and the Sephardic Jews, fellow outsiders, shared a microclimate of tolerance in the community known then as the Near Southside and now as the Babe Denny neighborhood, establishing a special relationship at a time when racial segregation was the norm in other parts of Indianapolis; and

WHEREAS, there are countless stories of bravery in the face of the elements that strove to separate the two communities in the neighborhood, such as defiance of local movie theaters enforcement of segregated seating, as when white Jewish children would sneak their black Christian friends down from the Jim Crow balcony; and

WHEREAS, upward mobility, Interstate 70, and the construction of a football stadium hollowed out the neighborhood starting in the late 1960s, scattering its residents and severing bonds of commerce and friendship tended by volunteers and at-risk youth, with simple maintenance tasks aimed at promoting community involvement and pride; and

WHEREAS, anthropology professor at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Susan B. Hyatt and her students set about finding former Southsiders and restoring those ties through social events and reciprocal worship services at South Calvary Baptist Church and the Etz Chaim Sephardic synagogue; and

WHEREAS, with students from her anthropology classes nearly 40 oral histories from former Southsiders have been recorded, and over 400 period photographs have been digitally scanned; and

WHEREAS, on December 20th, they will celebrate the launch of a book about this project entitled, "The Neighborhood of Saturdays: Memories of a Multi-Ethnic Community on Indianapolis' Southside," which shares the history of this unique community and includes a wealth of historical photographs, along with interviews from the elders who experienced that history; and

WHEREAS, the community celebrates the contributions of past, present and deceased community leaders of the Near Southside Babe Denny Neighborhood; leaders who were able to transcend racial barriers, promote social / economical changes, and helped to foster a safe family environment; and

WHEREAS, the community also recognizes the contributions of Southside institutions including Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation, South Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church, the Concord Neighborhood Center, the Babe Denny Neighborhood Group and the Southside Picnic Committee; therefore:

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY-COUNTY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS
AND OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA:**

SECTION 1. The Indianapolis City-County Council recognizes the Babe Denny Neighborhood for its contribution to Indianapolis, displaying tolerance and inclusiveness against the segregated tones of the day.

SECTION 2. The Council extends its appreciation and gratitude to all of the leaders who carried the torch for the Babe Denny Community Organization.

SECTION 3. The Mayor is invited to join in this resolution by affixing his signature hereto.

SECTION 4. This resolution shall be in full force and effect upon adoption and compliance with IC 36-3-4-14.

SPONSORS: Miller



Southsiders gather around Councilor Jeff Miller, District 19, as he reads a resolution in the City-County council chambers, praising the community for its spirit of racial and religious cooperation.

APPENDIX A

“Growing Up Sephardic”

By Gladys Cohen Nisenbaum

My father, Isaac B. Cohen, came to Indianapolis in 1906 with a compatriot from his native town of Monastir, now known as Bitola, in southern Yugoslavia (Macedonia), near the border of Greece. It was then part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. They were the first Sephardic Jews to come to this city. The local Sephardic population here came mostly from Monastir or from Salonika (Thessaloniki), Greece.



20. — MONASTIR. — *Maison rurale des environs*

Monastir—A rural home in Monastir, Macedonia.

My father was a Cohen in every sense of the word: he was learned in Torah and Talmud, and he often served as both the cantor and the rabbi at the Sephardic kahal (synagogue). He was a founder of the Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation.

The Sephardic people all lived within an approximate mile square between Senate Avenue on the west, Madison Avenue on the east, and from

800 north to 1400 south. The children went to school at IPS #6, #12 and #22, and most of us attended Manual High School.



Immigrants from Monastir in a Hebrew class with instructor Isaac Mizrahi. The Hebrew sign says, "Hooray to the Hebrew flag."

As most immigrants are, our families were courageous and adaptive, but they had to overcome an additional obstacle in integrating into a new country and particularly with respect to the Jewish community: that obstacle was to convince the Ashkenazic Jews, Jews of German and Eastern European descent, many of whom arrived in Indianapolis as early as the 1800s, that we were, indeed, Jewish since the language we brought with us was Ladino (a form of Spanish), and not Yiddish. How can you be a *bona fide* Jew if you don't speak Yiddish and don't eat gefilte fish, was the query we often heard.

Our families were devoted to Judaism and, at the same time, they welcomed the opportunity for education that was so terribly denied to them in their places of origin. Economic improvement and stability were high priorities. The support system of the Jewish Federation, which provided all Jews on the Southside with medical and dental care as well as with recreational



The Cohen family before Gladys was born—Parents Isaac and Esther Cohen with their children, left to right: Matilda, Isaac, Rose, Esther and Myrtle.

and cultural activities, was crucial. All of this took place at the old Communal Building, once located on Morris Street. Boy Scout Troop 52 had rallies and meetings at the Communal Building, and my brother Jack, along with Gil and Leon Cohen and Gilbert (Geon) Mordoh (of blessed memory) became Eagle Scouts of that troop. John Efroymson

was their counselor. Lee Brodsky Barnett, a social

worker at the Communal Building, was a friend and advisor and guided many people through the rigors of resettlement. One connection we all have to the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation is that most of us spent our summers at Big Eagle Camp, then operated by the Jewish Federation, which is now the Goldman Union Camp Institute at Zionsville. The archives of the National Council of Jewish Women document the classes in English in which so many participated when time allowed. Most importantly, it was Rabbi Feuerlicht and the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation that assisted Etz Chaim in building our own synagogue.

All of us went to Talmud Torah—the old name for the Bureau of Jewish Education (BJE)—and we still remember Meyer Gallin, Mr. Hyman, Mr. Harrison, and Zalman Cohen, our principal and teachers, respectively.

There was a provincial familiarity among all the families. We, even as youngsters, did not address our elders as Mrs. or Mr. but, rather, we addressed



A gathering of the Gladys Cohen Nisenbaum's family, ca. 1938. From the left: Chaim Calderon (uncle), Isaac and Esther Cohen (parents), Morris Cohen (brother), Lou and Rae Meshulam (brother-in-law and sister), taken on the 1100 block of Capitol. The little boy at the bottom of the photo is Buddy Yosha.

them by their first names: Estraya y (and) Gabriel, Polomba y Saba, Clara y Solomo, Esther y Itzak, Regina y Avram, Gracia y Avishai, and so on. It was not considered disrespectful. When we spoke to the very elderly, we used the prefixes “Tia” and “Tio,” which mean Aunt and Uncle. How well we remember Tia Sol, a legend to us all!

Life-cycle events—weddings, bar mitzvahs and other events—were attended by all. They were just announced in the local newspaper or by word of mouth. It wasn't until after World War II that people began to send out invitations. Holidays were festive, exciting, and a lot of work—there were 11 children in our family, plus relatives. Nevertheless, there was always enough food to feed everyone who came. Whenever we approach the High Holy Days, many people still remember my father chanting the sacred prayer, the Kol Nidre, in Ladino, which was the language of the Sephardim, as well as in Hebrew.

Our home was located right behind the kahal, the synagogue (then located at Church and Morris Streets). When it was Succot, the Festival of Tabernacles, we had the congregational sukkah (a small hut constructed during the harvest festival of Succot). I remember decorating it along with my



"The first word I think of when I think of the old neighborhood is cohesive," says Jack Cohen, older brother of Gladys.

out a spread of wine for the Kiddush (blessing over the wine), hard-boiled eggs, grapes, apples, and *roskas*, a special sweet bread made especially for this holiday. Afterward, during the 8 days of the Succot holiday, we had all of our meals outside in the succah. It is the fragrance of the fall flowers and the sometimes-crisp autumn air in the evenings that fills me with nostalgia for those times.

Pesach (Passover) was always special and, again, the changing of the Hagaddah (the story of the exodus from Egypt) in both Ladino and Hebrew is something I loved and will always remember. When I married my husband Nathan, it was considered an inter-marriage at that time because he came from an Ashkenazic (Eastern European) family. I am happy to say that we took the best of both traditions. I learned to make gefilte fish and eat borscht, both of which were new to my palate. Nathan was introduced to Sephardic food: bourekas, tursidas, fijones, pasteles, and taralikoos.

I hope this cursory sketch of the Sephardim in Indianapolis has given you a little flavor of our history and lifestyle. It was truly a wonderful way to grow up!

brothers and sisters—we would display the maroon velvet hangings with their beautiful metallic embroidered lions. One of the walls of the succah was the grape arbor that graced our backyard. After services at the synagogue, everyone came back to the succah where my mother would lay

APPENDIX B

Southside Nicknames

By Letha Beverly and William Levy, with Susan B. Hyatt

One of the challenging aspects of this project had to do with names. Because the Sephardic community is relatively small, and because the community came from just two cities, there were several families with the same last name who were not necessarily related. In addition, unlike the Ashkenazic tradition where children who are named after someone are always named after a deceased family member (sometimes with a name that just begins with the same first letter as the name of the deceased), it is common among Sephardic families to name children after living relatives. Therefore, we encountered two Morris Cohens, two Stephen Calderons and others with the same or similar names.

Among the African-Americans, there were also lots of family ties, and many people who shared the same surnames. (And, we had two Brenda Johnsons!) But one other characteristic shared by both communities was a penchant for nicknames. Some people were almost never called by their “real” names. Beatrice Miller, for example, was always known by everyone as “Pete” or Miz Pete. John Mance Calloway was always known as “Mancy.”

Anthropologist Jack Glazier was struck by the common use of nicknames among both the Sephardic and Ashkenazic southside Jews and explored this topic in one of his articles (Glazier 1987). Glazier notes that the nicknames were a way in which community members marked themselves as having an identity associated with the neighborhood where they had grown up. As he writes,

“... an important but not sole function of nicknames is their evocative and expressive capacity to call up nostalgic images of the urban community in which these names were conferred and disseminated and to reiterate the generational bonds among those who are socially enclosed by this knowledge. Through the many transformations of the original neighborhood and the social lives of its inhabitants, participation in what might be termed the community of nicknames continually reinforces one’s social and psychological moorings” (74).

Although Glazier was referring specifically to the southside Jewish community and their use of nicknames, these insights also apply equally to the southside African-American community. The use of nicknames was one way in which both communities reinforced their links to one another and to the old neighborhood.

So, go ahead! See how many of these nicknames below you can recall! Cover the real names on the left and see whether you can look at the nicknames on the right and match them up correctly! Many thanks to Letha Johnson Beverly and William Levy for compiling these lists for us.

1.	Linda Sears George	“T-Joe”
2.	Stanley Leonard	“Liku”
3.	Anderson Murff	“Homer”
4.	Albert Meshulam	“Bulu”
5.	Ora Murff	“Little Bit”
6.	Jack A. Cohen	“Carnes”
7.	James Canaday	“Snooze”
8.	Sam Camhi	“Yobo”
9.	Manuel Oden	“Twinkle”
10.	Izzy Levy	“Chinatown”
11.	Lurline Murff Bertrum	“Skipper”
12.	Harry Nahmias	“Shortspoke”
13.	William Smith	“Bruiser”
14.	Jack Alboher	“Blackjack”
15.	Houston Morgan Jr.	“Bugs”
16.	Sol Meshulam	“Shuah”
17.	Edward Moore	“Bean Head”
18.	Albert Nahmias	“Beto”

19.	Hilderman Harris	"Dump"
20.	Moe Calderon	"Pancake"
21.	Robert Cade	"Sticks"
22.	Morris Cohen	"Pasquale"
23.	Sid Camhi	"Shabi"
24.	Ernest White Jr.	"Juicey"
25.	Willis Bellamy	"Sockey-Sockey"
26.	Isaac Alboher	"Sabu"
27.	Leonard Evans	"Hawkeye"
28.	William Lewis	"Bo-Bo"
29.	Albert Alboher	"Itchibu"
30.	Robert Johnson	"Craps"
31.	Jack M. Alboher	"Machine"
32.	Carlester Johnson	"Calolog"
33.	Robert Dozier	"Dinky"
34.	Jesse Murff	"Sunny Boy"
35.	Mike Cassorla	"Puggy"
36.	Lulu Murff	"Sister"
37.	Charles Stewart	"Jigsaw"
38.	Morris Cohen	"Tito"
39.	William Craig	"Fuzzy"
40.	Daleno Bryant	"Butt"
41.	Harold Meredith	"Hog Mollie"
42.	Raymond Lee	"Poe-Cat"
43.	Gillie Cohen	"Mustang"
44.	Herman Nahmias	"Shrimp"
45.	Brenda Burell Johnson	"Porky"
46.	Jesse Coleman	"Sticks"
47.	Robert Bowman	"Texas"
48.	Eugene Beasley	"Bees Wax"
49.	Johnnie Miller	"Little Bit"
50.	Francis Murff	"Doll"
51.	Joe Nahmias	"Jumbo"
52.	Gil Cohen	"Tarzan"
53.	J.W. Smith	"Five"
54.	James Smith	"Scratch"
55.	James Hopson Sr.	"Dirty Red"

56.	Sunny Matthews	"Cripple Sun"
57.	Joann Lackey	"Snoonie"
58.	Reggie Cosby	"Cubbie"
59.	Hank Darden	"Butch"
60.	Meyer Nahmias	"Stego"
61.	Maurice Nahmias	"Strawberries"
62.	Beatrice Bowman Miller	"Pete"
63.	Maurice Endsley	"Squeaky"
64.	Juanita Clemmons Ealey	"Skeet"
65.	Charles Floyd	"Moose"
66.	Johnny Jefferson	"Flip"
67.	Raymond Jefferson	"Bucky"
68.	Ernestine Bryant	"Tenni"
69.	Clifford Ross	"Pookie"
70.	Henry Bernard	"Boobie"
71.	Daniel Dozier	"Dinki-Dinki"
72.	Marlon Bradshaw	"Butchie"
73.	Willis Bellamy Jr.	"Dodie"
74.	John Green	"Knuckle"
75.	Reginald Miller Sr.	"Brady Brown"
76.	Reginald Miller Jr.	"Pookie"
77.	Jack I. Cohen	"Cob"
78.	Jimmy Johnson	"Big Boop"
79.	Percy Johnson	"Kooda"
80.	Adrian Bellamy	"Hamburger"
81.	Mary Johnson	"Ba-Ba"
82.	Jimmy Johnson	"Shim"
83.	Virginia Bernard	"T.C."
84.	Will Lockett	"Meat"
85.	Shirley Walls	"Moppy"
86.	Gilbert Mordoh	"Geon"
87.	Leon Dixon	"Bug"
88.	Ruby Ford	"White"
89.	Irving Cohen	"Itch"
90.	Willie Strong Jr.	"Ju-Ju"
91.	Mary Alice Sanders	"Toots"
92.	Warren Hollaway	"Butchie"

93.	Clarence Hollaway	"Wade"
94.	Earl Cooley	"Tom Dollie"
95.	Porter Tapps	"Hots"
96.	Rosetta Crain	"Skeeta"
97.	Porter Tapps	"Hots"
98.	Robert Ross	"Buffalo"
99.	Wilbert Winston	"Pig"
100.	Willie P. Matthew	"Fuse"
101.	Moe Yosha	"Yon-tartu-oshay"
102.	Ronald Jones	"Dino"
103.	Charles Flemming	"Onk"
104.	John C. Hayes	"Tippy"
105.	Charles A. Harris	"Alkie"
106.	Terry Cooley	"Idammer Head"
107.	Marcie Cohen	"Tika"
108.	Sol Nefouse	"Foo Foo"
109.	Mary Hatcher	"Running Bear"
110.	Jesse Hatcher	"Slouch"
111.	James Hopson Jr.	"Fat James"
112.	Ralph Harris	"Pudgy"
113.	Donavan Harris	"T-Mont"
114.	Henry Dabney	"Dopey"
115.	Lillie Belle Moore	"Ba-Sis"
116.	Robert H. Moore	"Ri-Hi"
117.	Victor Barnes	"Wimpy"
118.	Melvin Rhodes	"Mickey"
119.	Dennis Baker	"Bowl Legs"
120.	Jack Meshulam	"Yacku Flaku"
121.	Henrietta Jackson	"Henni"
122.	Daniel Mason	"Poot Eye"/"Pudai"
123.	Paul Harris	"Brewy"
124.	Theopolus Jone	"Bubbles"
125.	Gladys Murff Johnson	"Cookie"
126.	Mary Elizabeth Stepp Matlock	"Kicker"
127.	Blanch Bernard	"Princie"

APPENDIX C

A Changing Neighborhood: The “Biography” of the 1100 Block of South Capitol

By Susan B. Hyatt

The history of the 1000 block of South Capitol (between Wilkins and Morris) offers us a particularly interesting illustration of how the composition of the neighborhood shifted over time. Using the listing from the Indianapolis City Directories, we can create a “biography” of the lifecycle of this block, looking at selected years from 1936 to 1983. In the first listing of names, from 1936, judging by the surnames, the block was heavily Sephardic (with some Ashkenazim as well), though it is also clear that the block was racially mixed. There were at least two African-American families who lived on that block for many years—the Dabneys and the Proctors—and there may have been others. By the 1952 inventory, the number of recognizably Jewish names has noticeably started to decrease. By 1968, one can note the appearance of some industrial properties on that block and by 1973, the western end of the block runs into I-70. The notation for 1983 reads, “Not open between W. Ray and Wilkins,” as many of the streets had by then been completely cut off by interstate construction. The number of vacant properties on the blocks also increased over the years.

In some cases, the occupations of the residents is noted; many of these small business people most likely worked in the local shops. The addresses with ½ in them were probably apartments within these houses that were rented separately and the “Mrs.” after the names (which appears as is in the original directories), suggests that these women may have been widowed or they may have been heads of households for other reasons.

Thanks to Pauline Finkton for assisting with this research.

1936: Wilkins Intersects

1101	Gibbs John
1104	Vacant
1105	Caplin Harry
1106	Toledo Jacob *(one of the earliest Sephardic immigrants to Indianapolis)
1107	Goldstein Abr
1109	Shapiro Morris
1110	Himes Jos
1113	Nahmias David
1114	Yosha Morris
1117	Dabney Arth
1118	Mordoh Mallah
1121	Cassorla Jos
1122	Levinson Sarah (Mrs.)
1125	Nahmias, Saml
1126	Kline Sarah (Mrs.)
1128	Tolback, Sol
1129	Calderon Hyman
1130	Dobrowitz Ida B., Mrs.
1133	Commiskey Ellen, Mrs.
1134	Schmidt Jennie
1137	Proctor Wm W
1138	Levy Morris
1141	Calderon Mathilda, Mrs
1142	Cohen Isaac B *(another very early Sephardic settler)
1145	Calderon Gabriel
1146	Cooper, Wm
1149	Staggs Arth
1150	Bergman Max
1150 ½	Piezer Max
1151	Greenwald Morris (baker)
1154	Feldman, Samuel

Morris Intersects

1944	Wilkins Intersects
1101	Gibbs, John
1105	Caplin Harry
1106	Huth John
1107	Goldstein Abr
1109	Shapiro Sarah, Mrs.
1110	Reimer Wm H
1113	Nahmias David
1114	Yosha Morris
1117	Dabney Arth
1118	Mordoh Mallah
1121	Cassorla Jos
1122	Levenson Roy
1125	Nahmias Sol
1126	Cohen Alex
1128	Toback Saul
1129	Caseldine Harvey
1130	Selig Leo
1133	Commiskey Ellen, Mrs.
1134	Schmidt Jennie Mrs.
1137	Proctor Wm.
1138	Levy Morris
1141	Calderon Mathilda, Mrs.
1142	Cohen Isaac B.
1145	Calderon Gabriel
1146	Osterland Chas
1149	Tompkins Edw
1150	Bergman Max
1150½	Vacant
1151	Solomon Abr (tailor)
1152	Bergman Max (junk)
1154	Safarty Isaac (grocer)

Morris Intersects**1947: Wilkins Intersects**

1101	Huth John B.
1102	Vacant
1105	Caplin Harry
1106	Hanrahan Dennis
1107	Albagli Miehl B Rev
1109	Shapiro Sarah, Mrs.
1110	Sham Albert
1113	Nahmias Anna
1114	Yosha Mollie, Mrs.
1117	Gordon Clifton E.
1118	Mordoh Mallah
1121	Cassorla Joe M.
1122	Rhinehart Howard H.
1125	Farish Bohar
1126	Cohen Alex
1128	Toback Sol
1129	Vacant
1130	Goldstein Abr
1133	Commiskey Ellen, Mrs.
1134	Schmidt Jennie, Mrs.
1137	Proctor Wm W.
1138	Levy Morris
1141	Calderon Leon L.
1142	Cohen Isaac B.
1145	Calderon Gabriel
1146	Martin Lew
1149	Lowe Ralph
1150	Bergman Max
1150½	Ott Frank V.
1151	Miller Jas. (used furniture)
1151½	Cott Cecil
1154	Safarty Esther, Mrs. (grocer)

Morris Intersects**1952: Wilkins Intersects**

1101	Richardson Isiah
1102	Hepner Geo (auto repair)
1105	McLendon Cleo
1106	Vacant
1107	Tyler Leon
1109	Sanders Geo
1110	Hepner Geo
1113	Neely Lemuel M.
1114	Vacant
1117	Gordon Clifton E.
1118	Mordoh Alvin M.
1121	Cassorla Jos M.
1122	Rhineheart Howard H.
1125	Farish Bohar
1126	Cohen Alex
1128	Toback Sol
1129	Vacant
1130	Goldstein Abr
1133	Lammers Kath, Mrs.
1134	No return
1137	Proctor Wm W.
1138	Cavanaugh Pearl, Mrs.
1141	Vacant
1142	Cohen Esther, Mrs.
1145	Dodson Jas F.
1146	Cassuto Isaac Rabbi
1150	Bergman Max
1150½	Vacant
1152	Padgitt David W.
1154	Fullen Alf (sign painter)

Morris Intersects**1957: Wilkins Intersects**

1101	Sharp Isom
1102	Hepner George (auto repair)
1105	McLendon Cleo
1107	Patrick Mary F, Mrs.
1109	Sanders Geo
1110	Hepner Geo
1113	Neely Mabel, Mrs.
1114	Butrum Carl
1117	Gordon Beatrice, Mrs.
1118	Hatcher Gilbert L.
1121	Johnson Shirley
1122	Shokely Gordon
1125	Clayton Donald
1126	Groves Arth
1128	Cook Ralph E.
1129	Ross Carl B.
1130	Goldstein Abr
1133	Thompson Wm. T
1134	Costelow R. Hubert
1137	Proctor Jessie, Mrs.
1138	Easman Hilda, Mrs.
1141	Johnson Eva, Mrs.
1142	Clark Wm A.
1145	Dodson Jas F.
1146	Zlotnick Nathan
1150	Bergman Max
1152	Costelow Walter E.
1154	Indpls Electrical Co.
	McEvay Thos L

Morris Intersects**1963: Wilkins Intersects**

1101	Vacant
1102	Hoosier Manufacturing & Repair
1105	Cruthird Warren
1106	Vacant
1107	Cruthird Warren A. Connor Earl
1109	Sanders Earl rear vacant
1110	Vacant
1113	Neely Mabel, Mrs.
1114	Williams Audrey B.
1117	Young Wm.
1118	Hatcher Gilbert
1121	Smith S. T.
1122	Thomas Roy
1125	Spurlock Warren G.
1126	Groves Arth
1128	Vacant
1129	Washington Maude, Mrs.
1130	James Naomi J, Mrs.
1133	Vacant
1134	Averitte Martha A., Mrs.
1137	Proctor Jessie, Mrs.
1138	Pennington Wm.
1141	Fisher Thelma E., Mrs.
1142	Strong Willie E.
1142½	Freeman Robt
1145	Dodson Jas
1146	Miller Jos J.
1150	Bergman Goldie, Mrs.
1152	Brown Edgar
1154	Vacant

Morris Intersects**1968: Wilkins**

1102	Construction Trucks Inc. Trucks Tires Inc.
1105	Vacant
1106	Vacant
1107	Vacant
1109	Sanders Geo rear: Pitten Mary
1110	Vacant
1113	Neely Mabel, Mrs.
1114	Scott Aaron
1117	Trammel Martin
1118	Hatcher Gilbert T.
1121	Smith S.T.
1122	Thomas Roy E.
1125	Cruthird Warren A.
1126	Watkins Bennett
1128	Conner Earl
1129	Wagner Jack L.
1130	Miller Anna, Mrs.
1133	Knifley Wm.
1134	Clayton Beatrice, Mrs.
1137	Vacant
1138	McAlexander Carl
1141	Cobb Martha
1145	Dodon James F.
1146	Miller Joseph J.
1150	Brown Edgar
1150½	Holloway Myra
1152	Ayers Larson E.
1154	Bailey Used Furniture Indiana Ceramic Slip

Morris Intersects

1973: Wilkins Intersects—Interstate 70 Intersects

- 1102 Huber Bros In. truck pntg
- 1105 Shelton Rubin
- 1107 Edmond Minnie, Mrs.
- 1109 Sanders Geo
rear: vacant
- 1113 Neely Mabel L., Mrs.
- 1114 Franklin Robt
- 1117 Vacant
- 1118 Hatcher Gilbert L.
- 1121 Smith, S. T.
- 1122 Thomas Roy
- 1125 Mitchell Claire
- 1126 Hatcher Mary, Mrs.
- 1128 Brown Pamela, Mrs.
- 1129 Kinffley Mildred L.
- 1134 Clayton Beatrice, Mrs.
- 1138 Cannon, Charles
- 1141 Cobb, Martha
- 1145 Dodson James F.
- 1146 Miller, Joseph J.
- 1150 Brown, Grace K., Mrs.
- 1150½ Dodson John
- 1152 Hopson Dorothy Ma.
- 1154 Indiana Ceramic
rear: Indiana Ceramic

W. Morris Intersects

1983: (NOT OPEN BETWEEN W. RAY AND WILKINS)

1109	Vacant
1113	Neely Mabel L., Mrs.
1114	Hatcher Mary
1117	Vacant
1118	Hatcher Gilbert L.
1121	Smith S. T.
1122	Thomas Roy
1125	Daniel Letha
1126	Johnson Mary S.
1129	Watkins Sherman R.
1130	Barnes Lisa, Mrs.
1134	Franklin Robt
1138	Brownlee Tommie C.
1141	Edmondson Martha, Mrs.
1145	Dodson James F.
1146	Miller Joseph J.

Works Consulted

Adams, Bryan, Tommy Tabor, and Joe Bobbitt. *Babe Denny Schools*. Working paper. 1998. Print.

Blackwell, Carolyn. "African Americans." *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Ed. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows. 1994. Print.

Brady, C.M. "The Transformation of a Neighborhood: Ransom Place Historic District, 1900-1920." Thesis. Department of History, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, 1996. Print

Carmichael, Hoagy. *The Stardust Road*. New York,: Rinehart, 1946. Print.

Carrel, Mark. *Babe Denny Neighborhood Jewish Synagogues 1800's to 1920*. Working paper. 1998. Print.

Clark, Jessie M. *Near Southside*. 2009. MS.

Cohen, Mark. *Last Century of a Sephardic Community: The Jews of Monastir, 1839-1943*. New York: Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture, 2003. Print.

Cohen, Sylvia Nahmias. "The History of the Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation and Community of Indianapolis, Indiana." *Indiana Jewish Historical Society* 34 (2001). Print.

Dedication of the House of Worship Bethesda Baptist Church 1922-1970. Rep. Indianapolis, Indiana, 1970. Print.

- Divita, James J. "Demography and Ethnicity." *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Ed. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows. 1994. 51-60. Print.
- Donovan, Jon Logan. *A Giant in the Community: A Report on the Influence and Ramifications of Eli Lilly & Company on Indianapolis and the Babe Denny Neighborhood*. Working paper. 1998. Print.
- Dorn, Pamela J. *Change and Ideology: The Ethnomusicology of Turkish Jewry*. Diss. Indiana University, 1991. Print.
- Einstandig, Max. *A Tour of the Old Southside Jewish Community Down Memory Lane. Period Covered: Basically the 1920s & Early 1930s*. 2005. MS.
- Erez-Boukai, I. *Oral Histories of the Etz Chaim Sephardic Jewish Congregation*. Ft. Wayne, Indiana: Indiana Jewish Historical Society, 2001. Print.
- "Former Negro Leagues Player Dies at 98." *Negro League Baseball Players Association*. Associated Press (AP). Web.
<http://www.nlbpa.com/owens_william.html>.
- Glazier, Jack. "American Sephardim, Memory, and the Representation of European Life." *Charting Memory: Recalling Medieval Spain*. Ed. Stacy N. Beckwith. 2000. Print.
- Glazier, Jack. "Nicknames and the Transformation of an American Jewish Community: Notes on the Anthropology of Emotion in the Urban Midwest." *Ethnology* 26 (1987): 73-85. Print.
- Glazier, Jack. "Stigma, Identity and Sephardic-Ashkenazic Relations in Indianapolis." *Persistence and Flexibility: Anthropological Perspectives on the American Jewish Experience*. Ed. Walter P. Zenner. Albany: New York, 1988. 41-62. Print.

- Gray, Ralph D. "Transportation." *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Ed. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows. 189-98. Print.
- Grossman, James, ed. *Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996. Print
- "Have A Hobby..." *The Indianapolis Star* 2 Oct. 1952. Print.
- Hazen, Marla, and Jennifer Molloy. *Ray Street and I-70*. Working paper. 1998. Print.
- Hazen, Marla, and Jennifer Molloy. *Small Business in Babe Denny: 1875 and 1919*. Working paper. 1998. Print.
- Hedeen, Jane n.d. *Essay: Jewish History in Indianapolis*, Post-War Resources, Indiana Historical Society. Print.
- Heffener, LuRae A., Mindy Carlson, and Yvonne A. Van Cleve. *Shapiro's*. Working paper. 1998. Print.
- Herschell, William. "It's A Three-O'Clock-In-The-Morning Job In South Street, But There Is Much Going On Before The Said Sun Parades." *The Indianapolis News* 12 June 1937. Print.
- Hulse, Lamont J. "Neighborhoods and Communities." *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Ed. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows. 132-41. Print.
- IPS Crispus Attucks Museum. Saturday, May 26. *A Tribute to Indianapolis Racing Legend Charlie Wiggins: The Negro Speed King*. 2012. Print.
- Kushner, Aviya Is the language of Sephardic Jews undergoing a revival? http://www.myjewishlearning.com/culture/2/Languages/Other_Jewish_Languages/Ladino/Today.shtml, accessed April, 2011
- Lamm, Maurice. *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning*. Jonathan David Publishers, Inc. Revised edition 2012. Print.

“The Jewish Cemetery Project Preserves Tradition.” *The Indianapolis Star* 26 July 2009. Print.

Louvenbruck, Maude. “The Near-Southside: As It Was and As It Is.” Thesis. Harvard University, 1974. Print.

Madison, James H. “Economy.” *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Ed. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows. 61-71. Print.

Manual Training High School. *History of School*. Manual Training High School. Print.

Marion County History. Rep. Indiana State Government. Web. <http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/files/marion_jewish.pdf>.

Martinez, Hughlene R. *Harry E. Wood High School: 1953-1978*. Working paper. 1998. Print.

Moss, Richard. “Creating a Jewish American Identity in Indianapolis: The Jewish Welfare Federation and the Regulation of Leisure, 1920-1934.” *Indiana Magazine of History* 2007. Print.

Mullins, Paul R. *Racializing the Commonplace Landscape: Archaeology of Urban Renewal Along the Color Line*. Taylor & Francis, 2006. Print.

Real Silk Company (Indianapolis, Ind.) Records, 1920-1952. MS. Indiana Historical Society. Web. <<http://www.indianahistory.org/our-collections/collection-guides/real-silk-company-indianapolis-ind-records-1920.pdf>>.

Reed, John P. *Babe Deny Neighborhood Research Project: Religious Institutions Between 1880-1920*. Working paper. 1998. Print.

Reiter, Robert E. “The Impact of the Federal Highways Program on Urban Areas.” *The Kansas City Times* 29 Nov. 1968, sec. D: 20. Print.

Scarpino, Philip, and Robert G. Barrows. "Urban Environment." *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Ed. David J. Bodenhamer. 199-298. Print.

Sepharad '92 1992. Commemoration of the Quincentenary of the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain. Unpublished booklet. Print.

Speer, Christine. "Keeping the Faith: How the City's Smallest Jewish Congregation Has Held On—and On and On—To Their Embattled Tradition." *Indianapolis Monthly* Dec. 2005. Print.

Thornbrough, Emma Lou. *The Indianapolis Story: School Segregation and Desegregation in a Northern City, 1993*. MS. Indiana Historical Society. Web. <<http://www.indianahistory.org/our-collections/collection-guides/emma-lou-thornbrough-the-indianapolis-story-school.pdf>>.

Toplis, Debbie. *Babe Denny Research Project II: Interviewing Neighborhood Businesses*. Working paper. 1998. Print.

"Who We Are." *Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation*. Wwww.ihcindy.org. Web. 2010. <http://www.ihcindy.org/who_we_are/index.php?page=435>.

Wissing, Douglas. "Cook Good, Serve Generously, Price Modestly: The Shaprio's Story." *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 2009: 4-15. Print.

DONORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

All of the individuals and organizations listed below contributed in some way to this project and most contributed in multiple ways. People donated their time, energy and monetary contributions to make this project a success. Organizations provided space for meetings, staff time and, in some cases, additional funding. The students in the 2010 and 2011 community research classes conducted most of the interviews and wrote most of this book. Our sincere thanks to everyone! We definitely could not have done it without all of you.

Individuals

Jack Alboher
Michael J. Alboher
Iliana (Lipsman) Anderson
Elora (Cross) Andrews
Lisa Golc Arnold
Joseph Averitte
Joelle Bahloul
Jackie Bellamy
Carol Beach
Teresa Bennett
Gina & Jay Berger
Letha Beverly
William Blomquist
Linda C. Board
John Brightwell
Charlie Bunes
Dennis Burton
Annie Calderon
Esther Calderon
Irving S. Calderon
Joseph Calderon
Samuel M. Calderon
Stephen Calderon
Stephen I. Calderon
John (Mancy) Mance Calloway
Sidney A. Camhi
Sharon Cannon
Mary Carpenter
Jessie M. Clark
Willa Clark-Rogers
Pierce J. Cody
Alan Cohen
Alan Cohen (President of Etz Chaim
Congregation)
Jack A. Cohen

Jennie Cohen
Lee Cohen
Leon S. Cohen
Morris Cohen
Mary Collins
Rosetta Crain
William Craig
Arthur Dabney, Jr.
Henry L. Dabney
Tom Dale
Flo Danzig
Pat & Judy Davis
Donald Denny
Phyllis A. Diamond
Jeannie Dinius-Regan
Lillian Dodson
Irit Erez-Boukai
David Eskenazi
Sidney & Lois Eskenazi
Pauline Finkton
Christine Fitzpatrick
Cil Flannery
Libby Fogle (Etz Chaim Memorial
Fund)
Stephen Foley
Samuel G. Freedman
Lee Frankowitz
Niki Girls
Jack & Sam Glazier
Hildermon Harris
Oretha Harris
Chaia Hazan
Allen Hazen
Rachael Heger
Marilyn Hendricks
John Herbst
Angela Herrmann

Bernard Horwitz
Deborah James
Brenda Burrell Johnson
Brenda Marie Johnson
Ellen Jane Craig Johnson
Jennifer Johnson
Beverle Miller Kane
Erin Kelly
Gerald Kraft
Modupe Labode
Carolyn Leeds
William & Faye Levy
Benjamin J. Linder
Donna Stokes Lucas
Lee Mallah
Stan Kim Mayfield
Linda Mayfield
Garry Mervis
Henrietta Schwartz Mervis
Beatrice (Miz Pete) Miller
Marvin Mitchell
Larry & Wilma Gibbs Moore
Sammie Moore
Cleo and Normajo Moore
Robert Moore
Alvin M. Mordoh
Leon Mordoh
Annie Rose Morris
Doris Morris
Paul Mullins
Anderson "Homer" Murff
Robert Murff
Harry Nadler
Aaron Nahmias
Cecile R. Nahmias
Joseph Nahmias
Meyer P. Nahmias

Scott Nahmias
Alec G. Nedelman
Allan H. Nefouse
Miles Nelson
Gladys Cohen Nisenbaum
Kristi Palmer
Lee and Al Passo
Michael S. Passo
Rick Passo
Samuel A. Passo
Emma Presswood
Mary Price
Sue Shapiro Prince
Anna Proctor
Becky Profeta
Mo and Bucky Profeta
Sadelle Ray
David & Pearl Regenstrief
Lynn Rogers
Kathy Rosenberg
Elizabeth Rubens
Paul Sallee
Richard Eugene Sallee
Sema R. Sapper
Brian Shapiro
Roseanne (Lipsman) Shields
Mike Shimp
Erika Smith
Victor Smith
Tony Stamatoplos
Don & Janet Stillerman
Susan Sutton
Betty Taylor
Cindy Turentine
Terry R. Ward
Marianne Wokeck
Rev. John W. Woodall, Jr.

David Yosha
Buddy Yosha
Sarah Zike

Groups and Organizations

1998 Urban Anthropology class
Babe Denny Neighborhood Group
Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church
Center for Research and Learning at
IUPUI
Center for Service and Learning at
IUPUI
Cohen Family Foundation Inc
Concord Neighborhood Center
Craig Funeral Home, Inc.
Deborah Sisterhood of Etz Chaim
Dog Ear Publishing Company
Dynki Deli and Staff
Etz Chaim Congregation Memorial
Fund
Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation
Greek Islands Restaurant
Hadassah
iStar Financial Inc.
Indiana Historical Society
Indianapolis Parks District
IUPUI Department of
Anthropology
IUPUI Department of Museum
Studies
IUPUI School of Liberal Arts
IUPUI Solution Center
IUPUI University Library Digital
Team

Jewish Federation of Greater
Indianapolis, Inc.
Jewish Historical Society of Indiana
Jewish Lawyers Group
Meridian Hills Apartments
Metro Enforcement, Inc
Nefouse & Associates Inc.
Shapiro's Deli
South Calvary Missionary Baptist
Church
Southside Picnic Committee
Stadium Village Merchants
Association
State Library of Indiana
WFYI

Students

2010 Class—Students & Teaching Assistants

Margaret Baurley
Dan Branstrator
Victoria Brown
Molly Dagon
Evan Danner
Adriana Escoto
Nova Hornsby
Amber Lane
Max Martin
Andrea McLaughlin
Lindsay Schaiper
Heidi Sebastian
Breana Sowers
Adam Vogel
Stephanie Yarian

2011 Class—Students & Teaching
Assistants

Erin Busk
Mercedes Cannon
Marcela Castro Madariaga
Evan Danner
Govind Dhaske
Cynthia Forrester
Jessica Forthoffer
Patricia Jordan
Dustin Klingler
Kirsten Lewis
Ryan Logan
Selena Massolini
David Plasterer
Christina Riley
Lindsay Schaiper
Drew Smith
Kenji Townsend
Anne Waxingmoon

